SEA-LORE

THE SEA-WOLVES

Fr.

SEA-LORE

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TO
MY MOTHER AND FATHER

PREFACE

WHEN browsing in bookshops we are always grateful to the author who so succinctly introduces his book that we can decide then and there, without wasting any time, whether this is the sort of book that edifies us, amuses us, or instructs us. Here the writer's task should be simple. This is a popular work on sailing-ships, the sea, and sailors; in short, the lore of the sea, written mainly for landsmen by one who loves the sea and ships, not for their tragedies and their sordid side, but for their beauty and inspiration. This book aspires to nothing higher than to be an introduction to a further interest in the subject. It informs a little (to those who wish to be informed), and it diverts a little (for those who seek an entertainment). It discusses, in a non-technical manner, most aspects of life at sea and ships in the old days of sail. There are signs of a general renaissance of interest in the sea and ships, and any propaganda that can be contributed to this most wholesome trend is all to the good. Furthermore, it is not too much to say that the matter is presented in an entirely new guise. Writers are frequently at the mercy of their illustrators, for it is plain that no two minds can think exactly alike, and the author is fortunate who gets his text adorned just as he wants it to be. The remedy, then, is to do one's own illustrations, a plan which has been carried out in the present case, and if the author finds fault with the manner of illustrating and decorating the text he has only himself to blame.

S. R. H. R.

CONTENTS

SEA-LORE

CHAPTER I

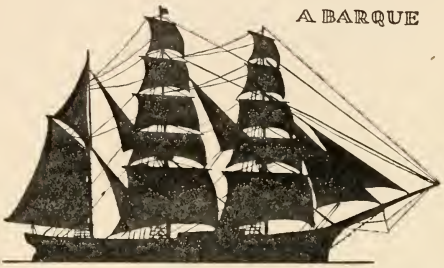
Mainly about Ships

WHEN a sailor speaks of a ship he refers to one particular type of sailing-vessel, and not simply to any large craft with sails. In a seaman's nomenclature a ship must have three or more masts, all of which must be square-rigged. But it is permissible in conversation to use the term 'ship' in a wider sense than is pedantically correct. If one speaks of having seen fifty ships anchored in the Downs it is likely enough that some of these craft were barques and brigs, but who would press the point? So let us speak of ships in general, but ships, barques, brigs, barquentines, and schooners in particular.

In the hierarchy of sailing-vessels the full-rigged ship is king, the barque is queen, the brig is a prince, the barquentine is a princess, and the dukes, duchesses, lords, and ladies are represented by brigantines, hermaphrodite brigs, schooners, ketches, and so forth, down to the plain citizens, which are all the smaller craft. In the order of precedence the ship, of course, comes first. Her sails are spread on yards which are set at right angles to the masts: hence she is said to be square-rigged; this in distinction to sails which lie in a fore-and-aft direction, as in schooners. A

ship can have more than three masts, but she must be square-rigged on all of them.

A ship's masts are fore-mast, main-mast, and mizen-mast. Each is divided into three tapering lengths—*i.e.*, lower mast, top-mast, and topgallant mast. The tops are the semicircular platforms at the head of the three lower masts. The cross-trees are the projecting horns at the top, or head, of the top-masts. The bowsprit carries the forestays and headsails. The headsails are the triangular sails, and, of



A BARQUE

course, are fore-and-aft sails, just as is the spanker, or driver, on the mizen.

To describe a barque is less simple, for she shares the characteristics of a ship and a schooner. She may have as many masts as her builders please to put in her, but she must have at least three, and the aftermost mast must be fore-and-aft rigged—the familiar rig of a small sailing boat. In other words, a three-masted barque is square-rigged like a ship on her fore and main, and schooner-rigged on her mizen. But a modern barque is usually larger than a ship and carries four or five masts. Captain Scott's last vessel, the *Terra Nova*, was a one-time steam whaler rigged as a barque.

The brig comes next in order. A brig is literally a two-masted, square-rigged vessel—a ship with the third mast

gone. Brigs are out of fashion now; the last were the North Country colliers known as 'Geordies,' which brought coal to the Thames. Brigs are, of course, much smaller vessels than ships. Closely related to the brig is the snow, a brig's twin sister, with a difference. The snow had, close to and abaft the main-mast, a spar, called the trysail mast, from which was spread a spanker sail. The snow is even more obsolete than the brig. Richard Henry Dana went round the Horn in a brig—the *Pilgrim*—and his classic

A BRIG

work *Two Years before the Mast* portrays vividly life on board one of these little ships.

A barquentine is a three-masted vessel square-rigged on the fore-mast only, the main and mizen being fore-and-aft rigged. Shackleton's *Endurance*, lost in the Antarctic in 1915, was a barquentine.

A hermaphrodite brig, as her name implies, is only half a brig. The other half is a schooner. Her rig is square yards on the fore and schooner-rigged on the main. There is no mizen.

A brigantine is square-rigged on her fore like the hermaphrodite brig, but on the fore-and-aft rigged main she sometimes carries small square sails aloft, almost a brig. With the brigantine we come to the end of the square-rigged types, unless we include Chinese junks and similar craft.

The fore-and-aft rig is designed mainly for small vessels, but it is seen nowadays in the huge American multi-masted schooners with their five, six, and even seven masts. The advantage of this rig lies in the ease with which it can be handled, and it is consequently economical, since it requires fewer men to work the vessel. The cute New Englanders soon discovered this advantage. Ten or twelve men can sail an 800-ton schooner when twice as many would be needed to work a full-rigged ship of the same size. On a

A BARQUENTINE

large schooner all the sheets work on horses—that is, iron rails which permit the booms to swing across while always under control. Some of the biggest schooners have reached a length of 300 feet and a tonnage of 4000. When the multi-masted schooners were introduced there arose the question of what to name the masts. Three masts and even four have been christened for centuries, but five and six masts gave the pundits something over which to dispute. It has not yet been arbitrarily settled, but here is a fair specimen of one system. Six masts are named, beginning forward, fore, main, mizen, jigger, spanker, and driver. Another type of American craft is the wonderful Gloucester schooner. These vessels can best be appreciated by likening them to schooner yachts that could go out a thousand miles into the Atlantic in a winter's gale and return with their holds full of fish. They are sturdily built to weather the big Atlantic rollers, yet at the same time have very

fine lines for speed. Speed is necessary in the race to get the fish home first. Their size is about fifty tons, and the shape of their hulls is very similar to that of the modern racing-yacht. Their small boats are carried on the deck in a novel manner—by placing one inside the other until four or five are 'telescoped' in this fashion.[1] It is an ingenious way of economizing space, and the set of boats is called a 'nest of dories.' Just outside Gloucester Harbour, and exposed to the full force of the Atlantic, is the reef of Norman's

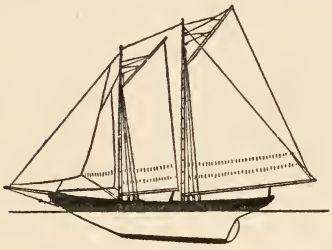
Woe, where, according to Longfellow, the schooner *Hesperus* was wrecked. Certainly it is a dangerous reef, and in bad weather when the Gloucester schooners are running in loaded with cod or mackerel, and with their decks almost awash, they give the dread Norman's Woe a wide offing.

A near relation to the schooner is the ketch. The latter's aftermost mast is smaller than the main, and is stepped farther aft. When this small mizen shrinks to a tiny thing and is stepped right aft abaft the rudder-head the ketch becomes a yawl. Thus you have three craft closely related, the two-masted schooner, the ketch, and the yawl.

Further than this we need not go, but beyond lies a harbour crowded with the small fry among sailing-craft—sloops, cutters, luggers, smacks, and all the quaint and fascinating craft of the Dutch and the Mediterranean ports.

[1] The thwarts, or seats, of dories are removable.

A name which seems frequently to be the cause of some speculation as to its meaning is ' clipper,' or ' clipper ship.' A clipper was a thoroughbred, built for speed. She made a passage in quicker time than the old-fashioned bluff-bowed tubs, and so ' clipped ' her passages short. Freight space in a clipper cost more than in other craft, the same applying to her passenger berths. The Australian emigrant ships which took colonists out and brought gold back were the colonial clippers. If they brought wool they were the wool clippers; if tea from Foochow they were the tea clippers, or China clippers. In comparison with a passage to Australia the Atlantic crossing was a mere ferry service. The fine ships which shuttled back and forth across the Atlantic were called the Western Ocean packets, and some of the best known of the clipper ships were in that service.



A GLOUCESTER SCHOONER

When increasing trade and passenger traffic justified a transatlantic service more frequent than the irregular sailings that had been the only transport for two hundred years, the famous Black Ball Line was inaugurated with regular sailings between New York and Liverpool. This was the beginning of a uniformity in the style of ships and uniforms owned by a private company. The East India Company seamen already had uniforms, but the ships of this company were more like a private navy than a commercial line. The first Black Ball ships were all flush-decked—that is, with a flat deck without a raised fo'c'sle forward or a raised quarterdeck aft. The only real break of the clean run of the deck was the midship house, or caboose, standing between

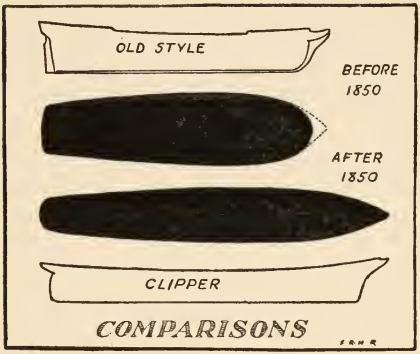
the fore-and main-masts, and on this deckhouse was lashed the long-boat, which accommodated the live sheep, pigs, and poultry for the ship's larder. Cows, too, were often carried in a pen placed over the main hatch, so that the deck of a Black Baller resembled a farmyard at times. A distinguishing mark of the Black Ball ships was the large black disc painted on the fore topsail, which could be made out at a distance of many miles. In the daytime the cabins below were lighted by the deck skylights, at night by oil lamps.

SCHOONER, KETCH, AND YAWL

The hulls of all the ships conformed to a uniform colour scheme, which was black with varnished natural-wood colour bends, while the inner side of the bulwarks, boats, and hatch-houses was painted green. These were the early Black Ball ships from the beginning in 1816 until some time in the thirties, when, as the old prints show, they underwent the natural changes of the time. The house flag remained a crimson swallow-tailed flag with a black ball on its field. The crew wore a distinctive uniform in contrast with the usual nondescript costume of the irregular packet-ships of the day. These early packets were driven across the Atlantic with as much sail as they could carry in all weathers, with the result that they did not last many years, and so were sold cheaply to the Nantucketers to be refitted for whaling.

But with all their hard driving the early packets were not fast enough to satisfy the needs of the increasing emigrant

traffic, and ship-designers everywhere experimented on new lines. In 1841 a certain marine architect in New York, J. W. Griffiths, proposed breaking away from the time-honoured blunt bows and heavy stern, and produced a model that was so revolutionary in its design that it met with the opposition with which most new things are received. However, the following year a ship was commissioned to be built on Griffiths' lines, with the result that the clipper *Rainbow* came into being. She was the first extreme clipper ship to be built. Her bows were concave, as we see them in the later ships, but at the time of her launch her critics said the bows looked as if they had been turned inside out. Another ship, the *Ann McKim*, which had been built a few years before, was, in a sense, the first clipper; but to the *Rainbow* and to her designer should go the palm for the first of the really fast ships. Her design was entirely justified, and for many years she was the fastest vessel in the world; but she did not live long, being lost off Cape Horn in 1848.



The next famous square-rigger to come along was the *Sea Witch*, built in 1846, a handsome ship with extreme raking masts and a wonderful dragon for a figurehead. Her best run for twenty-four hours was 358 miles, a speed which no steamship of the time could reach. Her first captain was the notorious Bully Waterman, who feared neither man nor devil. It is said that he kept padlocks on the topsail

sheets to prevent any faint-hearted officers from reducing sail in a gale of wind.

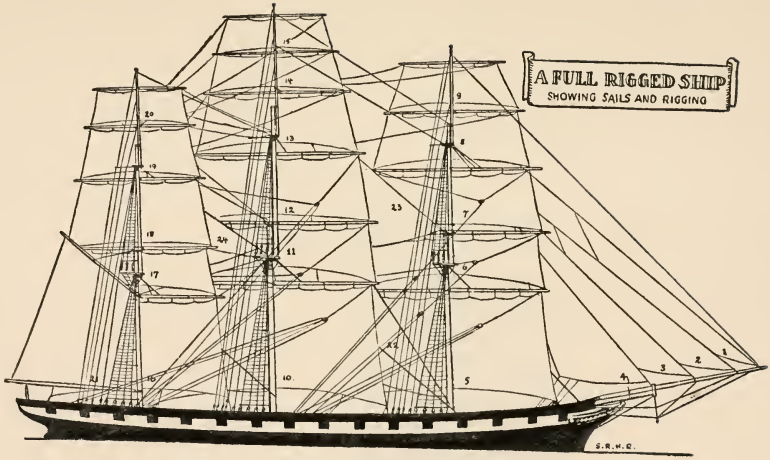
A typical clipper of the eighteen-fifties was the most beautiful of all water-borne craft. Here is a picture of the *Oriental* (1850) described by Captain Clark: [1]

> Every line of her long black hull indicated power and speed; her tall raking masts and skysail yards towered above the spars of the shipping in the docks; her white cotton sails were neatly furled under the bunt, quarter and yardarm gaskets; while her topmast, topgallant and royal studding sail booms and long, heavy lower studding sail booms swung in along her rails, gave an idea of the enormous spread of canvas held in reserve for light and moderate leading winds; her blocks, standing and running rigging, were neatly fitted to stand great stress and strain, but with no unnecessary top-hamper, or weight aloft. On deck everything was for use; the spare spars, scraped bright and varnished, were neatly lashed along the waterways; the inner sides of the bulwarks, the rails and deck houses were painted pure white; the hatch combings, skylights, pinrails and companions were of Spanish mahogany; the narrow planks of her clear pine deck, with the gratings and ladders, were scrubbed and holy-stoned to the whiteness of cream; the brass capstan heads, bells, belaying pins, gangway stanchions and brasswork about the wheel, binnacle and skylights were of glittering brightness. Throughout she was a triumph of the shipwright's and seaman's toil and skill.

If the American clippers were the champions of the Atlantic and the Cape Horn passages the British came to the fore with the Australian and China clippers. In the pre-Suez Canal days, when the sea-route to India was perforce by the Cape of Good Hope, there was every incentive to produce speedy vessels to shorten a more than four months' voyage from Sydney Heads to the Thames. These were

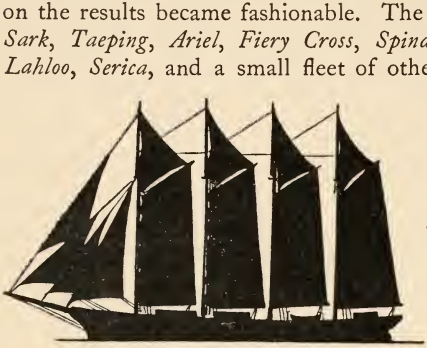
[1] *The Clipper Ship Era: A Record of Famous British and American Clipper Ships, their Owners, Builders, Commanders, and Crews*, by Captain Arthur H. Clark (Putnam).

the emigrant ships that took out the British colonists and brought back gold and wool, and formed a group called the colonial clippers or wool clippers. They had a rival group of their own race in the China or tea clippers, perhaps the finest of all the later clipper ships. England had become a nation of confirmed tea-drinkers, but tea was very expensive stuff a hundred years ago—so expensive, in fact, that it was customary for a tea-caddy to have a lock and key. But the China clippers brought down the price of tea by getting it to England in large quantities in the minimum of time, and our great-grandmothers were then able to throw away the keys of their tea-caddies. The China clippers were comparatively small ships and built of the best materials, with lines like a racing yacht. They had a low freeboard and a narrow breadth which gave them a long, slender shape and enabled them to cleave through the water like an arrow. Their decks were as clear as possible from the obstruction of upper works to permit the free and unhampered working of the ship, and all wood and brasswork was kept scrubbed and polished as on a private yacht. In 1863 a new type of clipper was built, the type known as the composite ship, so named because it was constructed of both wood and iron, instead of entirely of wood, as had been the practice from the beginning of history. This system of building ships was a British invention that had been tried successfully a few years before; but it was not introduced in tea clippers until the date I have mentioned. In the composite ship the frames, which had hitherto been of shaped timbers, were now made of iron, while the planking remained of wood bolted to the frames. This system made for increased strength, though it had its disadvantages, the main one being the risk of galvanic action between the iron frames and the copper sheathing; but these disadvantages were so outweighed by the advantages that composite construction became the accepted fashion.



1. Flying jib. 2. Outer jib. 3. Inner jib. 4. Fore topmast staysail. 5. Fore-course, or foresail. 6. Lower fore topsail. 7. Upper fore topsail. 8. Fore topgallant sail. 9. Fore royal. 10. Main course, or mainsail. 11. Lower main topsail. 12. Upper main topsail. 13. Main topgallant sail. 14. Main royal. 15. Skysail. 16. Cross-jack, or cro'jack. 17. Lower mizen topsail. 18. Upper mizen topsail. 19. Mizen topgallant sail. 20. Mizen royal. 21. Spanker, or driver. 22. Main topmast staysail. 23. Main topgallant staysail. 24. Mizen topmast staysail.

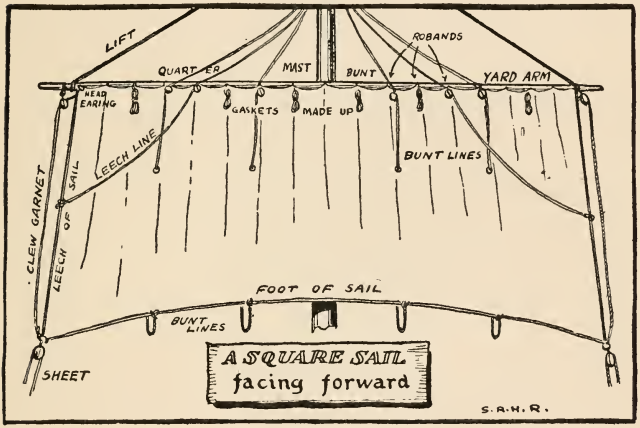
The speed of the tea clippers brought many of these ships into prominence, just as a racehorse can become famous, with the result that many thrilling sea-races took place on the hundred-day passage between Shanghai and London. The Western world was set agog with interest, and betting on the results became fashionable. The *Thermopylæ*, *Cutty Sark*, *Taeping*, *Ariel*, *Fiery Cross*, *Spindrift*, *Sir Lancelot*, *Lahloo*, *Serica*, and a small fleet of other clippers permanently wrote their names in the sailing-ships' *Who's Who*.



AMERICAN FOUR-MASTED SCHOONER

The colonial clippers also contributed some imposing names to the history of square-riggers. The mid-Victorian newspapers gave much space to the doings of the *Marco Polo*, *Red Jacket*, *Lightning*, *James Baines*, *Champion of the Seas*, and *Sovereign of the Seas*, and from time to time the *Illustrated London News* would come out with the old-fashioned woodcut or line engraving of one of these famous clippers. Each ship had its own peculiarities, its own adventures, and its special title to fame. During the Indian Mutiny many were used as transports for troops, the *James Baines* and the *Champion of the Seas* racing out to India as troopships ' neck and neck ' the whole way on one occasion. The former caught fire while in dock at Liverpool in 1858 and became a complete wreck, the hulk being afterward converted into a landing-stage there. The *Marco Polo* was the first vessel to shorten the passage to Australia, but, being an early type, she had not the speed, nor the fine lines, of the later clippers. But she had a daring captain in Bully Forbes and

performed some wonderful passages. On one occasion she brought home £100,000 in gold dust, and also a 340-ounce nugget which the Government of Victoria had sent to the Queen. The *Marco Polo* was built in New Brunswick, and was therefore 'Canadian-born,' like many famous clippers. She met her end by running ashore on Prince Edward Island in



August 1883, while carrying a cargo of pitch-pine, having long since been ousted from the passenger service by the steamers.

By 1880 most of the famous old clippers had disappeared, and a new race of sailing-ship began to appear—the big, four-masted steel barques. These could compete favourably with the steamship, and so by their increased cargo capacity over the old clippers and their change of rig they were able to keep sail a little longer on the seas. The barque rig enabled a large sail area to be handled by fewer men than on a ship of the same tonnage. Hence came the big barques, the largest of which is the *Kobenhaven*, of 3965 tons, and launched as recently as 1921 at Leith. She

has five masts, and is manned by sixty-five men. But the limit in the size of square-riggers was by no means reached by the *Kobenhaven*. The largest windjammer ever built was the *France*, a five-masted full-rigged ship of 5633 tons and 418 feet long. No other sailing vessel, either barque or ship, has ever been built to equal the size of the *France*. She had a very short life, however, and was wrecked in the Pacific in 1922 by running ashore. Those who saw her towering above the other ships in the Surrey Docks just before she sailed on her last voyage are not likely to forget her amazing size. In the length of her steel hull she, of course, had hundreds of superiors among the steamships, but in the size and height of her enormous spars and masts she had no equal anywhere. Her gigantic upper yards were raised and lowered by steam winches on deck. And, incredible as it seems, she was rigged with eighty miles of steel and manilla standing and running rigging. With her thirty sails she was a fast ship, having logged as much as 420 knots in twenty-four hours in a gale. Her captain was extremely fastidious about the set of his ship's sails, and to ensure that they set flat he always cut them himself on board, and made the crew do all the stitching by hand. Captain Lepart and his crew were Bretons, and being short and sturdy men, looked inadequate to man such a large ship. It seemed impossible that they could stow the enormous courses the *France* carried, especially when the canvas was frozen stiff. But size is not so important in handling a vessel as seamanship and sailor-craft, and the small Breton men make as fine sailors as can be found anywhere.

The days when the seven seas were criss-crossed by the tracks of sailing-ships are probably gone for ever, and few of us of this generation have ever seen a double topsail yarder, under full press of canvas, going down the Channel. With the sun in the west, a warm light on her sails, and soft purple shadows on the under curves of the canvas, her

rigging silken threads, her spars slender reeds, she cleaves the deep blue water, a picture that gives one a thrill of pleasure to behold. Fairylike, ethereal, she belongs to the realm of unreal things, and one respects the men who conceived such a thing of beauty. Perfectly she harmonizes with her surroundings; there is not a jarring note. Like a bird, she fits her background, just as the petrels and gulls fit into any picture of the sea. The miracle of beauty is that, whatever the conditions—the colour of the sea and sky — your sailing-ship harmonizes to perfection with the setting.

I have the memory of a wonderful picture seen years ago; a barque under lower topsails and a fore staysail driving through the grey and white seas of the North Atlantic. This picture was not, however, on canvas, but on sky and water, and the barque was a very real vessel. We passed her during a strong westerly gale off the Grand Banks. She was at one time but half a mile to starboard, for we had shaped our course to get near enough to read her signals, which were difficult to distinguish owing to the air being so laden with flying spray blown from the tops of the waves. We in the tramp steamer were taking the seas badly, some-

times rolling down to the rail, but mostly pitching. That morning there was a particularly devilish head-sea, and the racing of the antiquated reciprocating engines when the propeller came out of the water added to our discomfort and to the inferno of noise on board. We must have looked rather an alarming sight from the poop of the wind-jammer, where we could see men watching us just as we were watching them.

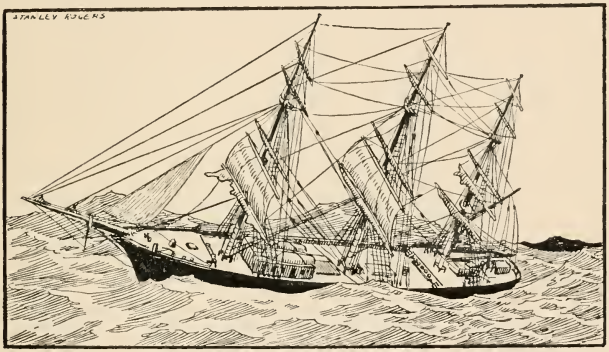
But what a difference between us! Our bows would plunge into the head-sea and throw tons of water right over the fo'c'sle-head and on to the fore deck, while the stern would lift clear of the water, and let the poor overworked propeller whirl round in a mad race to smash itself and the engines, which threatened to tear themselves from their bedplates. Then our seesaw would tip up the other way, and the terrifying sight of a mountainous sea reared up astern would be our reward if we dared look aft; while if we looked forward the drunken disc of the ocean had disappeared altogether, as if the ship had determined to leave this troublesome world and shoot straight up into the skies.

As for the barque, she rode the seas like a gull. She did not plunge clumsily through them as we did: *she rode over them*. She was snug and safe. We were likely to founder, lose our rudder, or smash our engines. We were in a box of machinery built to defy the sea and the winds. We butted through them in a bullish sort of way, and the elements did their best to smash us. But the bird of passage yonder rode out the gale or scudded before it, and as she yielded to the wind's might the god of storms treated her kindly. No need to pity the barque. I have no doubt, however, but that her crew were pitying us for being at sea in such an unwieldy tank.

I was speaking of sailing-ships harmonizing with their backgrounds, and assuredly the barque seemed just as much at home in that waste of tumbling grey water as she would

sailing, white-winged, on a calm summer sea. One imagines her in the tropics on a moonlight night, like a phantom ship with her white sails and white freeboard showing ghostlike against the darkness. Or, again, we picture her silhouetted dark against a warm sunset or a cold morning sky—a lovely pattern, sharp against the clear light of dawn.

As a further illustration of how perfectly the old sailing-ship harmonized with her surroundings, I call to mind a ship



seen one moonlight night in the Channel. The moon, reflected on a placid water, made a path of light from the horizon to the edge of the shore. This silver roadway sparkled like the facets of a diamond by the slight movement of the sea, and, as I watched, there came across this path of light a full-rigged ship. She had all her sails, even to her ' flying kites,' set to catch whatever breath of wind was stirring. She slipped so silently across the moon's light and looked so ethereal one expected to see the stars through her sails. And, had it not been for the single red eye of her port-side light to give evidence of her reality, one would have said she was no mortal ship at all. Presently she melted into the sky, whence she had seemed to come,

and there was nothing left of her save the unwinking point of red light, which marked her progress until that too disappeared into the night.

Ships cannot exist without dockyards, and a dockyard in the days of hemp and oak must have been a fascinating place. There were stacks of timber sawn into huge square beams, limbs and trunks of oak-trees left uncut to be fashioned into curved frames, and in the water would be floating great baulks of teak and oak—pickling, seasoning in the salt. Reared up into the sky, so incongruous on dry land, were the skeletons of frigates and line-of-battle ships. Great iron anchors with wooden stocks lay here and there; and near by, on stout blocks, were the long spars on which men would stand to shave them down with adzes to make masts and yards true and to give them their delicate taper. In the turnery shop busy artisans would be turning up great hardwood deadeyes and shaping blocks. And somewhere in a shed you would have found a sculptor in wood, chipping and carving on a gigantic scale the figureheads that adorned the prows of all ships. Figureheads have now been superseded by straight stems of steel with no romantic nonsense about them.

A few years ago, at the northern end of Vauxhall Bridge, in London, stood a ship-breaking wharf, and the premises were usually surmounted by the vast and somewhat alarming figureheads from defunct ships. Some of these wooden giants still remain there, staring with unseeing eyes on to a modern world in which they take no part. No more will they breast the waves and bravely lead their ships across the ocean, their wooden faces cracking and blistering in tropical suns or plunging with imperturbable calm into icy seas.

In the past, figureheads were as much a part of a ship as knobs are of a bedpost or curtains of a window. A ship without a figurehead was inconceivable: she was unfinished.

The *Revenge* had a rampant lion at her prow, and the last of the clippers, the *Cutty Sark*, still preserves her original figurehead of Nannie, the beautiful witch of Burns's poem *Tam o' Shanter*. In the seventeenth century figureheads were works of art; the most skilful woodcarvers of the day were commissioned to execute the work. Grinling Gibbons took such craft so seriously that much of his finest work went into the figureheads of the men-of-war of his time. Some figureheads were dull affairs, others were amusing; still others were dignified and often (though not always) beautiful. The favourite form of figurehead was the effigy of a woman—usually a Venus, a nymph, or an Amazon, though sometimes of a lady less romantic, such as the wife of a captain, a plump little body in Early Victorian dress. Such homely little ladies could be seen adorning the bluff bows of North Country collier brigs, and to the captains they were, no doubt, romantic figures indeed.

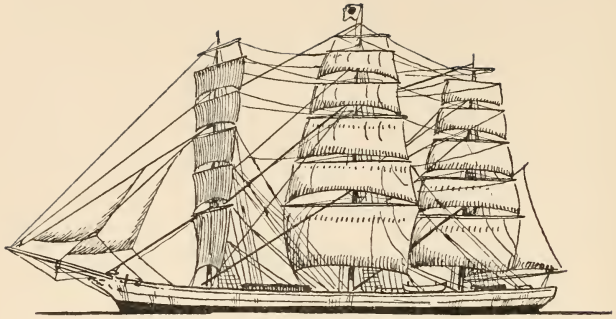
There was an American clipper captain who, while superintending the building of his ship, gave instructions that the figurehead, which took the form of a woman, should have her hair and draperies hanging still without any suggestion of being blown backward, because, as he put it, "I don't want my ship to look as if the wind is always dead ahead." An instance of an amusing figurehead was the one on the clipper ship *Styx*. It was, so they say, a very lifelike representation of the devil, painted a chocolate brown from horns to hooves. The clipper *Nightingale* had a bust

of Jenny Lind, and another picturesque figurehead was that on the *Champion of the Seas*, which had on her bows a tall, muscular sailor, with a bronzed, clean-shaven face and dark curly hair. His white trousers, tight at the hips and wide at the bottom, were held up by a black belt fastened by a great brass buckle. His shirt was blue and white checked, loose-fitting, with a wide collar rolled over a black neckerchief tied in a square knot. He wore a dark-blue jacket, and waved aloft in a massive, square, tattooed hand a shiny black tarpaulin hat. That is the sailor of romance as we picture him to be, the jolly lad who danced the sailors' hornpipe and sang *Tom Bowling* to a group of admiring rustics ashore.

On some ships the figurehead could be quickly unshipped when danger threatened. On the old men-of-war it was the usual thing to unscrew the projecting and more vulnerable parts of a figurehead, such as the arms, before going into battle. The figureheads of deep-water ships were invariably painted a pure white; only the coasters, such as the collier Geordies, were permitted by an unwritten code to have their figureheads painted in whatever colours took their captains' fancy.

But all this sort of thing has passed away, or nearly so. I suspect that a modern shipbuilder considers figureheads as something a little childish and beneath his notice. The picturesque ships have gone, just as the picturesque seamen have gone. A modern fo'c'sle crowd—what is left of the

tribe—look a drab company in their nondescript clothes. There is none of the tarpaulin hat, checkered or red shirt, and pea-jacket nonsense in the modern sailor. Nowadays he comes aboard in a straw, bowler, or felt hat, and the ordinary dull landsman's clothes; and if you saw him ashore you would not know him for a sailor. The pride in the profession has gone because seamanship, at least for the foremast hand, is not the profession it once was.



CHAPTER II

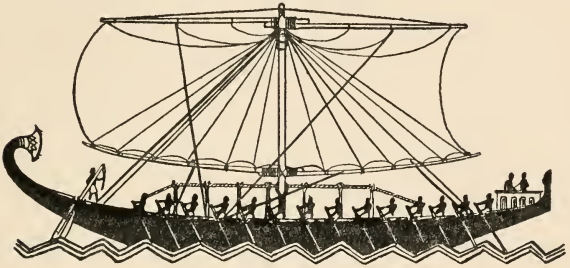
The Family Tree

SHIPS, like humans, evolved from a much simpler form than their present shape, and the family tree of the noble clipper had its beginning in the log raft and primitive dug-out canoe. The last type of the sailing-ships, the big steel barque, boasts a pedigree running back thousands of years. Its roots lie in the earliest civilization, when the low-browed, hairy men paddled their coracles and dug-outs through the primeval swamps.

The Egyptians made the first sailing vessels, but as Egypt was a land without forests, and timber of any size was rarely seen there, the Nile boats hardly altered in design during two thousand years. The Egyptian craft were cleverly built up of short and narrow pieces of timber which necessitated a system of overlapping to give them sufficient stiffness, but at best they were unseaworthy craft, for the Egyptians were not deep-water sailors, and Egypt's sea-borne trade was insignificant.[1]

[1] The wood used for the hulls was probably acacia, or imported cedar and spruce. The masts were most likely of Assyrian fir, but not so large as the tall sticks of our Northern forests.

Then came the Phœnicians and Cretans and the Greeks, who began to venture out of sight of land, and the art of shipbuilding had a different story to tell. The Greeks, being a fighting race, specialized in warships, and that awe-inspiring weapon the ram came into being; also, with the advent of larger ships the numbers of slave rowers was increased. Broadly speaking, in form the ancient Greek ship resembled a dolphin. The ram was the dolphin's



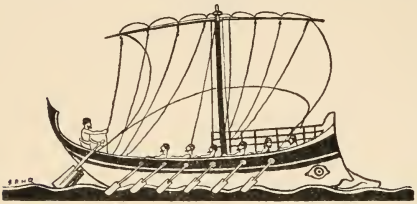
LARGE EGYPTIAN SHIP
c. 1200 B.C.

snout, and the high stern his tail, as though he were swimming with this extremity out of water. To enhance the illusion a vast eye was painted abaft the bows on either side of the vessel. This custom of painting eyes on the bows of ships prevails in some parts of the world to this day. The Portuguese *moletas*, the Eastern junks, and some Italian boats are examples of this fashion.

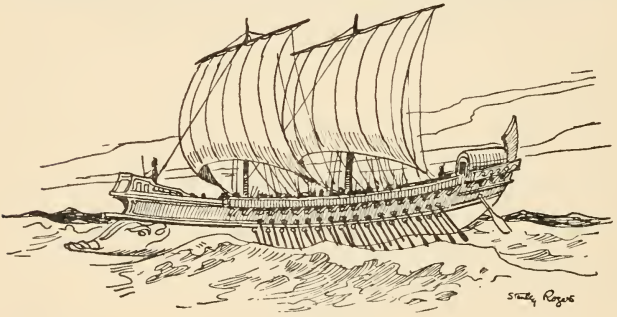
Then came the Romans, and their ships, like their buildings, were more highly ornamented than those of the Greeks. The latter were ever the greater artists, but the Romans were the better engineers, and, in the mechanical sense, improved on the Hellenic ships.

Meanwhile, the people of Northern Europe were in a state of semi-barbarism, and were venturing off their coasts in nothing better than glorified canoes. But as the Roman

civilization declined the Northerners emerged from their primitive darkness, and the Vikings became a force to be reckoned with on the seas. They were true blue-water sailors, and there is plenty of evidence that they visited the American coast hundreds of years before Columbus did.



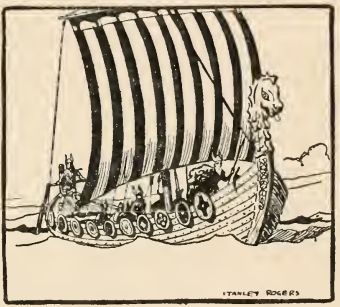
That the larger Norse vessels were capable of crossing the Atlantic we know, not merely through the story of Leif Ericson, but by practical demonstration. A replica of the famous Gokstad ship, which was dug out of the blue clay at Sandefjord, Norway, in 1880, was built, and sailed from



A GREEK BIREME

Bergen to Newport, Rhode Island, in 1893, with a crew of twelve men. Leaving Bergen on the 1st of May, they arrived at Newport on the 13th of June, and brought good reports of the modern Viking ship's sailing qualities. Though she met some rough weather, she came through without mishap, and at a good average speed. Voyages so

far afield were only made by the later Norsemen. It was not till A.D. 1000 that Leif made the first recorded Atlantic crossing. As open boats are not suitable for winter voyaging in Northern seas, it was not the custom of the Norsemen to put to sea in the winter time. With the coming of the first snow their ships were dragged ashore over rollers and housed under protecting roofs until the return of spring permitted them to take to the sea again.



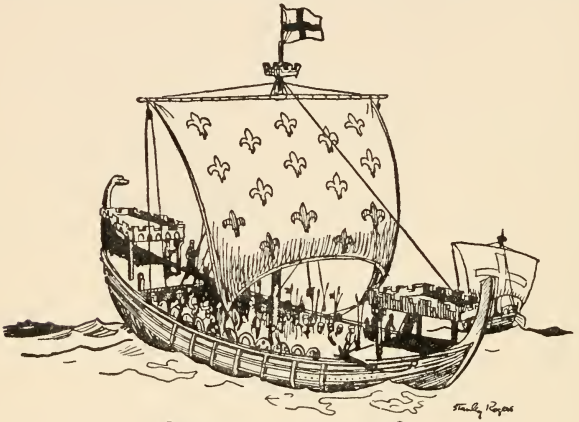
The salient features of the Viking ship, in distinction from the Mediterranean craft, were the graceful, double-ended shape and its clinker build. The planking, instead of being laid on the ribs or frames, edge butting on edge, as in the Roman ships, was put on so that each plank overlapped the one below it. Ships in the Roman style are called carvel-built, a method which leaves the surface of the hull quite smooth after it has been caulked. The clinker-built craft is still used in the small rowing- or sailing-boats seen at the seaside, and it is naturally a very strong method of building, as each plank has a thicker strake[1] where it is doubled. The modern Norwegian fishing-boats are direct descendants of the Viking ship. The old wooden whaler-boat of fifty years ago was modelled after the Norse type, because it was the ideal shape for riding out rough seas. It rode over them, not through them.

The medieval ship was the next step from the Viking craft, and not until the time of Columbus did ships come to be decked over and assume the familiar shape of the galleon

[1] A strake is a line of planking.

with its tiers of guns. Of galleons there were many sorts, and the name itself seems to exercise the minds of the curious. There were the galley, galleas, and galleon, and it is sufficient to say that a galley was primarily a vessel propelled by oars, a galleas by oars and sail, and a galleon —largest of the Elizabethan men-of-war—by sail alone.

But with all the development of ship-design, improved



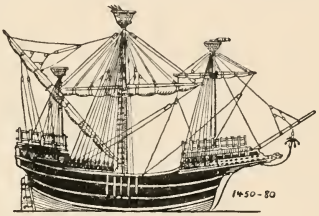
Mediaeval Ship

knowledge of sailing, and so on, this would not have carried sailors far without the compass, that simple little instrument that is the very nerve-centre and eyes of a ship, for without it she is blind. Just when the compass was first thought of it is impossible to tell. Certainly a primitive floating needle was used as a direction-finder in China and Arabia long before it was known of in Europe.

There was no distinction between warships and merchantmen in medieval times, the latter being simply armed as fighting ships when the need demanded it. Fighting at

sea before the introduction of guns was a very personal affair. The main idea was to get alongside the enemy, hook on with grapnels, and take him by boarding in a hand-to-hand fight, while the topmen, aloft in the round tops, threw down Greek fire (a compound which ignited when exposed to the air), dropped pots of quicklime, or shot arrows into his midst.

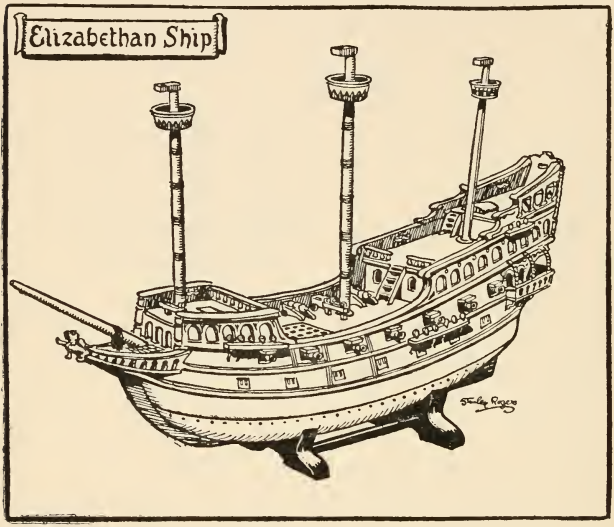
The invention of cannon altered all this, for, even though the first guns were very crude and unsatisfactory, with them the opposing ships could hammer each other at a distance. Not that boarding went out of fashion, for this method of fighting lasted until recent times. Guns on ships were first used some time about 1360, and were then placed to fire *over* the bulwarks. Later on, in the next century, square holes were cut in the ship's side which allowed the guns to fire through them. The topmost plank, or 'wale,' as it is called, had the openings cut in it for the guns. Hence came the word 'gunwale.'



CARRACK, LATE MEDIEVAL

Most of the familiar terms for different parts of our modern ships have evolved from an earlier form, which in the course of time has become greatly abbreviated. Take, for example, 'fo'c'sle.' The undecked vessels of William of Normandy's time later came to have a raised platform built at the stern and the bows, from which archers shot their arrows. These platforms had low wooden walls around them, embattled like those of a tower; hence they came to be called stern castles and fore castles. The latter in time was corrupted to fo'c'sle, sterncastle falling into disuse altogether. And the word 'topgallant' comes from the Tudor navy. On the old single-pole masts of the

early galleon days there was a ring of rope just under the fighting-tops which was called the ' garland.' As this ring was the only division between the upper and lower part of the mast, the upper masts were called top garlands, which was later changed to topgallant, and still further by sailors into t'g'lant. Likewise the deadeyes of the present day



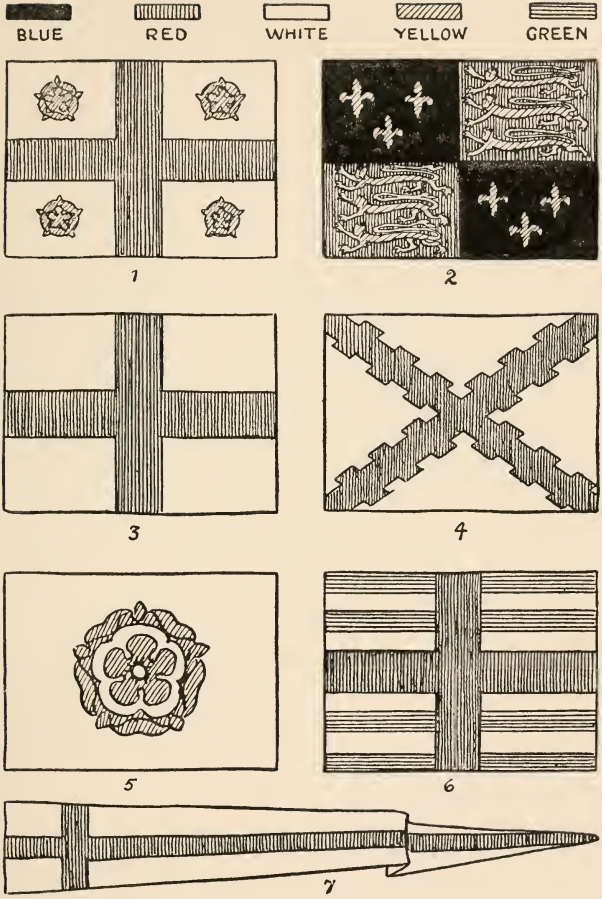
were, in Elizabethan times, "dead men's eyes," a gruesome name that was not inapt. In the Tudor navy the number of sails was increased, and likewise the number of decks and guns. Rigging was becoming complicated, and the whole machinery of the ship was growing more and more a mystery only intelligible to a skilled seaman. Sir Walter Raleigh wrote of the improvements in ships of his day —of top-masts which could be lowered, of topgallants, of studding sails, and of a capstan for weighing the

anchor, and of the advance of knowledge in the art of sailing.

About this time an event happened which was to have a great influence on maritime history. I refer to the establishment of the East India Company. In the year 1600 Queen Elizabeth granted a charter to a select company of merchant adventurers trading to the East Indies. These merchants called their company "The East India Company," and for two centuries this "shipping trust" was permitted to monopolize the maritime trade with India and the East. Known variously as the "John Company" or the "Honourable John Company," it was the greatest monopoly of its kind that has ever existed. The first fleet of five ships the Company sent from England in 1600 returned from Sumatra (where friendly relations had been established with the Sultan) with a rich cargo of silks and spices. So greatly did the Company prosper that the shareholders waxed rich, and gentlefolk considered it a highly desirable thing to apprentice their sons on board East Indiamen. The captains and officers of these ships, besides having a very handsome salary, contrived to make such huge profits out of their private speculations that a reasonably businesslike officer could retire after a few voyages with a comfortable fortune. Apart from this inducement to serve in East Indiamen, the officer's social standing was regarded as not inferior to that of a naval officer. The ships themselves were manned and worked, especially during the latter part of the Company's history, like frigates in the navy. In those days pirates infested the seas, and an Indiaman, always a desirable prize, was armed with guns like a frigate. The ships were run on man-of-war lines, with gun-drill, small-arms practice, courts martial, flogging, and all the discipline of a naval vessel. Also, they were allowed to fly the coach-whip pennant similar to that of the Royal Navy. Indiamen were not built for speed,

and the modern slogan " Safety first " could well have been the Company's motto. At sunset the lighter sails were stowed, and the ship was made snug for the night, this being the rule, no matter how calm the seas might be. Such conservative customs did not make for progress in merchant shipbuilding, and undoubtedly the East India Company put a sort of drag on the advance of contemporary ship-design. But such a monopoly as this company had could not hold out against the gradual enlightenment of intelligent people, and when the storm of public criticism grew too strong for the Government to ignore it any longer the monopoly was abolished, commerce with the East being made free to all independent traders in 1832. This, combined with political expediency concerning the administration of Indian affairs, was the cause of the Company coming to an end. Thereafter, as they were not able to compete successfully with the progressive methods of energetic competitors, the Company sold their ships and closed their offices for ever.

From the æsthetic point of view the galleon marks the ship's most picturesque development. At a later date—in the Stuart period—they became even more ornate, but certainly less picturesque. The crescent shape began to flatten out into a hull resembling more closely our modern idea of a ship. For a long time carved and gilded ornament was loaded on warships with increasing lavishness until the cost became so prohibitive that a reaction set in, and men-of-war slowly assumed a more sober appearance. The Elizabethan galleon will always appeal to the human love of the picturesque and the romantic, not merely because it belonged to a Golden Age, but for its own intrinsic beauty. There is something suggestive of a swan in the shape of a galleon, for both sit sedately on the water with their breasts low and their tails up, and when swans unfold their wings their likeness to galleons with sails spread to the wind is



SIXTEENTH-CENTURY NAVAL FLAGS

1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, Tudor navy. 4, Spanish Armada

still more suggestive. But the galleons were woefully bad sailers. The wind would catch the wall-sided stern and blow the ship to leeward, a great disadvantage when manœuvring in battle.

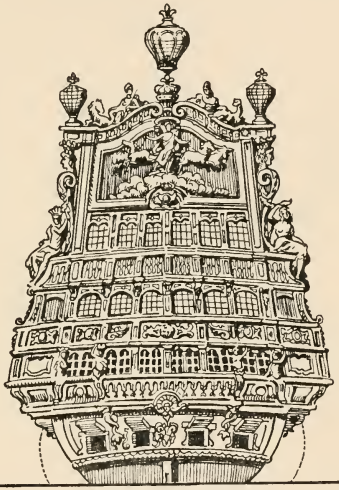
After the Elizabethan galleon the next distinct phase of ship history, ignoring, of course, the transition time, was the Stuart period. We have reached the days of first attempts to classify ships by rating, of line-of-battle ships and frigates, of the great ships *Prince Royal* and the *Soveraigne of the Seas*, of the great naval architects, the Petts. In this period the carved and gilded decoration on men-of-war reached extravagant limits. The French went even farther than the English and Dutch in this fashion, as witness the first-rater *Monarque*, which carried on her stern no less than twenty-seven gilded wooden figures, none being less than life-size!

From old histories we glean all sorts of interesting information about the seventeenth-century ships. We read how shot-holes made in a vessel's hull were plugged with salted hides or covered with sheets of lead, and how in foggy weather ships' crews kept up an intermittent firing of muskets, ringing of bells, or beating of drums. We learn that the first yacht was seen in England in 1660, and came from Holland as a present to Charles II. From that country also came the word 'taffrail'—the sternmost rail of a modern ship. On the big, flat sterns of the seventeenth-century ships a picture was often painted in place of the customary carved woodwork, and the Dutch called this the *tafereel—i.e.*, picture. Hence our word 'taffrail,' though we use it in a different sense.

The Dutch ships were invariably of a smaller build and shallower draught than those of other nations, because of the shallow waters around the Dutch coasts.

The first royal yards and sails came in in the early part of the century, and also the spritsail topsail, which hung on

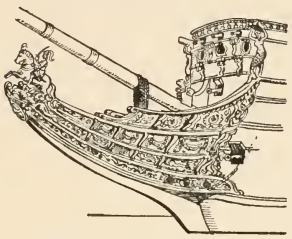
that cumbersome candlestick placed upright on the bowsprit's end. This was done away with in 1730, and by the middle of the century the first staysails had been introduced, while three rows of gun-ports were now the rule on the largest men-of-war. The bobstay, which holds the bowsprit down, was not thought of until 1690; up to then the less satisfactory method of securing the bowsprit close to the beakhead platform with a lashing called a 'gammoning' was the only anchorage for this important spar. The increase in the number and size of ships in the English Navy gradually depleted the oak forests of the island, so ship-timber began to be imported from the Baltic ports and elsewhere. The New Forest in Hampshire and the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire were the two main sources for oak timbers for English ships, and it is said that as these forests became denuded a certain famous admiral at a later date never took a country walk without carrying a pocketful of acorns, which he sowed in likely spots by the roadside. Though English sailors were probably superior seamen to the men of any other nation, the same could not be said for English ships. Many of the vessels of the Royal Navy were copied from types in Continental



THE DECORATED PERIOD: "LE SOLEIL ROYAL"

navies, especially from the French, who were very clever shipbuilders.

A characteristic feature of the Stuart ships was an elongated beak placed low, and a very long bowsprit raked up at a steep angle. All gun-ports were square, except those of the upper tier, which were round and had a carved wreath of leaves encircling each. The round holes in the spritsail below the bowsprit were for letting the water out when this sail dipped into the seas. By the end of the century most of the carved ornament on ships had disappeared, and both men-of-war and merchantmen began to assume the simpler lines and more sober colours of a less picturesque age.



BEAKHEAD DECORATION, 1640

In the eighteenth century great strides were made toward the betterment of life at sea, and the art of navigation became less a matter of guesswork and more an exact science. Captain Cook discovered in fresh fruits and vegetables and a clean ship a prophylactic and a cure for the dread plague of scurvy, which had killed more men than were ever killed in war. The Harrisons, in perfecting the chronometer, enabled navigators to find their longitude with an exactness hitherto impossible.

This was such an important event that it deserves more than passing notice. Latitude, the distance north or south of the Equator, was fixed in the eighteenth century by observation with the quadrant, which was a sufficiently reliable instrument; but longitude, the distance east or west, had baffled both navigators and scientists alike from the beginning of history. Philip III of Spain[1] offered a prize of 1000 crowns to anyone who could discover a satisfactory

[1] 1578–1621.

way of finding longitude, and then the States of Holland announced that they would award 10,000 florins to the successful solver of the problem. Nothing, however, came of these offers, and inability to determine their longitude still remained a cause of frequent disaster to sailors on badly charted coasts. Wrecks were common occurrences, and lighthouses were few. Indeed, as we know them now they did not exist. Apart from the remains of the Roman pharos at Dover and at the Isle of Wight, the few coast lights were pale beacon fires, or cressets, placed on some of the more prominent headlands of the European coasts. The tragic loss of Sir Cloudesley Shovel's fleet in October 1707 on the Scillies moved the English Government to offer a prize of £20,000 for the discovery of a method of finding longitude with reasonable accuracy. After years of the most patient work and experimenting John and William Harrison in 1765 constructed a reliable chronometer, and the prize, after much delay, was paid in full. Thus the chronometer did for longitude what the quadrant and sextant had done for latitude.

Among the improvements for handling a ship that belong to this century was the invention of the steering-wheel, which came into general use about 1750, though a primitive form of the idea was used as early as 1710. This was worked like a windlass with handles, the tiller ropes passing round a drum, just as on the winding drum of an old-fashioned well. Previous to this—during the days of the galleons—steering was effected with a tiller which was controlled by the 'whipstaff,' an upright stick which was swung to the right or the left, somewhat after the manner of the control-stick of an aeroplane. Regular uniforms now distinguished naval men from merchantmen, and for officers a regulation blue coat with white facings became obligatory.

On board men-of-war the guns were greatly improved

both in range and accuracy of aim. The system of deck breastworks, called hammock nettings, in which the men's hammocks and bedding were placed in a sort of rack or trough round the bulwarks as a protection from gun-fire, came in as armaments increased in range and effectiveness. By 1770 the lateen mizen sail was abandoned in favour of the more square-cut spanker, though the fore part of the lateen yard remained, devoid of canvas, for many years longer. The reason for its survival was that captains were loath to part with the long lateen spar, as it was frequently useful in replacing other spars damaged in bad weather. At the same time that the lateen sail was abolished the bowsprit was lengthened by the addition of a lighter spar called the jib-boom, and this in time was further lengthened by a slender pole called the flying jib-boom. With the jib-boom, triangular head-sails were first used, and consequently the sailing qualities of ships were greatly improved. This was the age of corvettes, sloops-of-war, and frigates, these last-named being the fast, light-armed cruisers of the period. Frigates were two-deckers, without guns on the lower deck, their armament varying from twenty to fifty guns. Men-of-war with less than twenty guns were called sloops or corvettes. A line-of-battle ship carried over fifty guns, in two or more tiers. The French continued to build the smartest and best-designed ships, and they specially excelled in building frigates. Some of the best frigates in the British Navy were those captured from the French, and British officers preferred to serve in these vessels. They were faster, and easy to handle in all weathers. Besides the sloops there were ketches and brigantines among the fighting ships. The brigantines came to the North from the Mediterranean at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The name was later contracted to brig, the original name being used nowadays to designate a different type of vessel. Sloop, by the way, did not refer to rig, as it does now, but

to size and armament. A sloop-of-war could be square or fore-and-aft rigged.

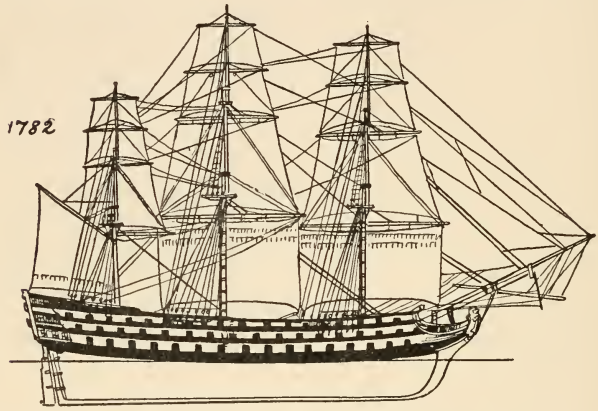
The march of time brings us now to the end of the great Georgian era. It also brings us to a long period of sea wars which inevitably had an influence on naval architecture. The star of the John Company is on the wane, and the coming of the clipper ships is not far off. Before the advent of nineteenth-century ideas there is still a period of transition to pass through, a space of years which lasted from 1800 to somewhere in the forties.

OLD SEA LIGHTS

Sperm oil and candles still furnished the luminant for the old sea lights, and the time on shipboard was still marked by the half-hour glass. Hemp cables were used long after 1812, when the first chain cable appeared: tree-nails were the classic timber fastenings for ships, and copper sheathing remained until the general adoption of iron in shipbuilding.

The time-honoured colours of the British men-of-war changed from a rainbow-like gaiety to the more sober hues of black and yellow, this latter colour being later altered to white—the white strake, or band, running along each tier of gun-ports, the square covers of which were painted black, so that when closed they presented the familiar black and white chequerboard effect so characteristic of the later *Victory* period. I say later because the *Victory* was already a veteran when she went to Trafalgar, and had not always been painted in the colours I have described. Her seagoing life extended over sixty years, which speaks for the staunch-

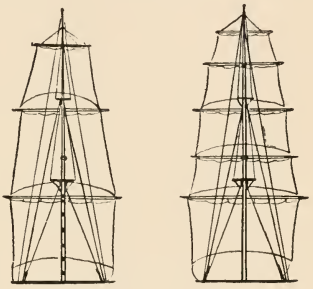
ness of her timbers. A ship of the line usually took from five to eight years to build, though the *Victory* was completed in less than three years, the builders being ordered to hurry up her construction. Nor did she suffer in the process, for never was there a stronger ship built. The colour of the masts was a dull yellow for the lower masts, the top-masts being simply varnished. The lower yards and gaff were



painted black, and the upper yards varnished like the top-masts. During the wars with the French, British men-of-war went into battle with their spars painted white in order to distinguish them from the enemy, whose masts were painted black. Not until 1840 was the old custom of painting the interior of the fighting ships blood-red changed to a uniform white inside the bulwarks and below deck.

After the Napoleonic wars were ended the arts of peace began to find expression at sea as well as on land. Mercantile shipbuilding awakened to its own importance in the scheme of things, and, gaining confidence, taught the world to appreciate the relations of speed and lines to ship-design.

Two great events happened that were to change the whole course of ship evolution in a way hitherto undreamt of. I refer to the coming, first, of the marine steam-engine and then of the clipper ship. Although quite outside the subject, we cannot entirely ignore the wheezy, puffing new-comer that sailors called "dirty old smoke jacks." Little did they think that these ugly, feeble little paddle-boats were to grow so strong in time as to drive the sailing-ship off the sea.



SINGLE AND DOUBLE TOPSAILS

The Americans, always an inventive people, were the first to build a ship of streamline shape, which is really the whole secret of a clipper ship. It is extraordinary that the idea had not been thought of sooner, for it is plain to anyone that it would be easier to propel a sharp-pointed craft through the water than one with a prow as bluff as the end of a packing-case. Yet that is not an unreasonable comparison between the blunt bows of ships of the old order and the fine, sharp entering edge of the clipper ships. Of course, the extreme clipper type was not evolved immediately, the first efforts at streamline design being somewhat shy and tentative, but the idea was right, and once its worth was proven builders on both sides of the Atlantic outrivalled each other in building these fast sailing-ships, until the deck plan of an extreme clipper resembled a very long, thin cigar in shape. These fast ships brought in their train many innovations. There were, for instance, the double topsail-yards first tried by a Captain Forbes in 1841, and improved upon by Captain Howes in 1853, both American skippers. The *Great Republic* was the first ship to incorporate the Howes rig. She was built in the early fifties, a barque-

rigged clipper of 3400 tons, the biggest ship of her time. The value of double topsails to such a big vessel is obvious, for had her topsails been single they would have been so large as to be not only unmanageable but dangerous in heavy weather. Another American saw no reason why the cross-jack yard, the lowest yard on the mizen-mast, should not have a sail, so he bent one to this yard and called it the cross-jack, or cro'jack. This yard never had any canvas bent to it, hence its former name—barren yard or, as the French called it, *vergue sec.* Other innovations were the slinging of lower yards on iron trusses and making them a fixture, so that they could no longer be lowered at sea; iron became an accepted fact in construction and fittings in the forties. The use of iron frames and wood planking, the composite construction, marked the transition from wood to iron, and many a famous clipper was a ' composite ' ship. Hemp standing rigging was retained until about 1855; but from then onward new ships were fitted with wire rigging. Wooden spars were still used, but sails were now bent to a wire along the top of the yard, called the jackstay, which came in after the Napoleonic wars. Up to the early nineteenth century they had been bent below the yard by ropes called robands. With the coming of wire-rope rigging the old art of the ship riggers began to die out and a new race of riggers took their place. The day was passing when every seaman's vocabulary included carrick bends, gunner's knots, sheepshanks, Matthew Walkers, Flemish Eyes, rolling hitches, and all the rest of that mysterious terminology. When rigging screws came into fashion ships lost much of the fascinating detail of chain plates and deadeyes. The jib-boom, too, was banished, and the bowsprit, a graceful spar of wood, was now supplanted by a shorter one of steel, a stump bowsprit. Steel everywhere: steel stanchions, steel anchor stocks, steel yards and masts, steel ropes, steel helm-wheels, steel ladders, steel bitts, capstans, fife-rails,

hatch-coamings, tops, cross-trees, and even boats. Wood, that workable material, which lent itself to the sympathetic touch of the craftsman, gave way to steel, and most of the picturesqueness of ships had passed. The world was growing more practical and more efficient, and anything that could not hold its own in competition with machinery had to go. The opening of the Suez Canal was a warning that the halcyon days of the sailing-ship were over. They could not compete with steam for carrying capacity or speed. The commercial factor of time became increasingly important. The modern merchant could no longer remain at the mercy of the winds. There is besides the advantages of the economy of time and carrying capacity the factor of safety that commerce demands in sea-transit. This the steamship can claim to have to a greater degree than a vessel whose movements are very much governed by the winds. The march of material progress constantly demands efficiency, and the picturesque must make way for the practical. We cannot, and should not, in our minds put the clock back and bid the world stand still, however much we may admire the sailing-ship—one of the most beautiful things man ever created.

CHAPTER III

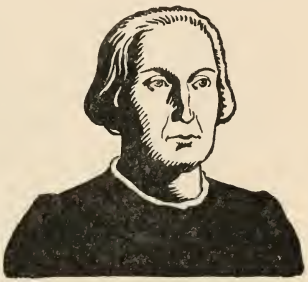
Early Navigators

BEFORE Columbus (1446–1506) set out to find Cipango [1] and the Indies little had been done in the way of exploration during the preceding ages. Legend says that Leif Ericson, son of Eric the Red, crossed the North Atlantic in a Viking ship in the eleventh century, and reached the mainland of North America, thereby anticipating Columbus by nearly five hundred years. The saga of Eric the Red belongs to an age when legend and fact were sung together, and though it is quite likely Leif did reach Nova Scotia or New England, he left no traces there of his visit; nor does his voyage compare with the Genoese Admiral's in importance.

Columbus was original, he followed his own line of thought, and, like all pioneers, he was intellectually ahead of his time. His persistent faith in his beliefs, his courage, and his qualities of leadership put him before all others. He exploded the fantastic theories of the scientists and navigators of the day, not by counter theories, but by practical demonstration. His great vision of a route to India

[1] The old name for Japan.

was derided by the wiseacres, but he persisted in believing the world to be a sphere. At length he won the interest of Isabella, the Queen, and her consort Ferdinand. There was plenty of Court intrigue and opposition from the old school of thought, but in the end, when his appeal for State aid for an expedition had seemingly failed and he had in fact set out for France, a messenger was sent after him to inform him that the Queen had granted his petition. Columbus returned at once to the royal camp, where an agreement between him and their most Catholic Majesties was drawn up and signed. In the course of time, as we know, three ships were found, the *Santa Maria*, the *Pinta*, and the *Niña*, and in these small craft, the largest of but 100 tons, and with a disreputable crew of outcasts who had to be bribed to go, the courageous Admiral set out into the unknown.

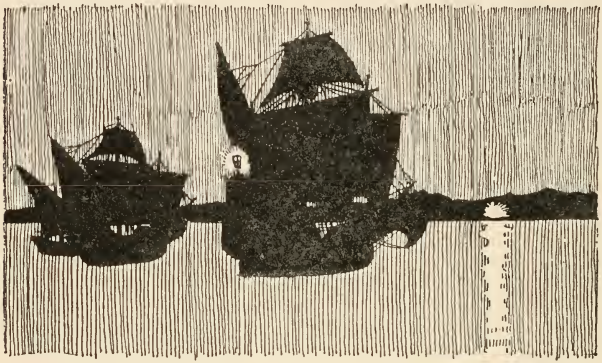


CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

Three days out the *Pinta* lost her rudder, and the fleet put in at Teneriffe for repairs, and while there the *Niña* was changed from a lateen to a square rig to enable her to keep up with the other two. On September 6, 1492, the three ships started their voyage into the unknown—the passage as far as the Canaries being, of course, in known waters. The instruments for navigation were crude, but by their means Columbus could take his position. He steered by a compass divided, as it is to-day, into 360 degrees. For taking the sun's height he had the astrolabe and the cross-staff, which must have been the devil to hold steady with any kind of a sea running. With the astrolabe he also took the height of the sun, though I should say

that, of the two, the latter would be the more reliable instrument.

The wonder of this voyage is that it was accomplished at all in such small vessels and hampered, as Columbus was, by the superstitious fears of the ignorant and motley crew. Some expected to perish by sea monsters, others to go over the " edge " of the world into eternity. Presently



they began to murmur and clamour to return, but Columbus encouraged them to keep on a little longer until that momentous night when a light was seen ahead and land appeared with the coming of dawn. After a passage of sixty-nine days the weather-beaten little ships came to anchor, and a boat was sent ashore with the Admiral dressed in his richest clothes. Stepping on to the sandy beach, he raised the standard of Aragon and formally claimed the land for Spain. He had landed on what is now known as Watling Island, which he christened San Salvador. He had expected to reach Cipango or India, and had brought letters to the Grand Khan of Cathay, but they were never delivered.

When the news reached England in 1493 that Columbus had reached the Indies by sailing across the Atlantic there was living in England a Genoese captain named Giovanni Caboto (1420–98), whom we call John Cabot. He had moved to London with his family some years previously, and had already distinguished himself as a navigator of considerable spirit and enterprise. Columbus's voyage filled Cabot's mind with plans to sail westward likewise until he reached Asia. Application for letters patent was made to the King, while in the meantime Cabot's friends rallied to find a ship. In 1496 the formal permission was granted by Henry VII to his "well-beloved John Cabot, citizen of Venice, to Lewis, Sebastian and Santius, sonnes of the said John, . . . full and free authority, leave and power . . . upon theyr own proper costs and charges, to seeke out, discover and finde whatsoever isles, countries, regions or provinces of the heathen and infidels, . . . which before this time have been unknown to all Christians."

Thus armed, Cabot left Bristol in May 1497 with a crew of eighteen in a vessel called the *Mathew*—but let Hakluyt [1] describe the result of the voyage:

> In the yere of our Lord 1497 John Cabot a Venetian, and his sonne Sebastian (with an English fleet set out from Bristoll) discovered that land which no man before that time had attempted, on the 24 of June, about five of the clocke early in the morning. This land he called Prima Vista, that is to say, First seene, because as I suppose it was that part whereof they had the first sight from sea.

Cabot had, in fact, discovered Nova Scotia by landing on Cape Breton Island. The royal banner was set up, and the land was formally taken possession of in the name of the King. Hakluyt goes on to tell how the inhabitants

[1] *The Principal Voyages of the English Nation*, vol. v ("Everyman Library," Dent).

of this island wore "beasts skinnes," and that they used as weapons "bowes, arrowes, pikes, woodden clubs, and slings." Also we are told that the land "yeeldeth litle fruit, but it is full of white beares, and stagges farre greater than ours." Cabot, like Columbus, thought he had reached Asia, and when he reached England once more he hastened to tell the King that he had reached the country of the Grand Khan. For this information a grateful King gave instructions that Cabot should receive a present of ten pounds! The enthusiastic navigator informed the King also that he would make a further voyage during which he would sail southward along the coast of the country of the Grand Khan until he reached Cipango, at which the delighted King promised Cabot ten ships and further rewarded him with a pension of twenty pounds.

On this next voyage he sailed so far north among the ice that the crews mutinied, forcing their leader to turn southward. They tarried awhile at Baffin Land, and then set off southward in search of Cipango, until they reached the thirty-eighth parallel, which is about the latitude of what we now call Maryland, but, as their stores were running low, they turned homeward for England, where, shortly after landing, John Cabot died. Of his three sons nothing seems to be known of Lewis and Santius, but Sebastian gave a good account of himself independently, both as a soldier and a sailor.

The son of King John of Portugal, called Prince Henry the Navigator (1394–1460), though not a discoverer, was all his life an active patron of the art of navigation, and personally equipped and sent out a number of ships on voyages of discovery.

The year that Prince Henry died there was born into the world Vasco da Gama (*d.* 1524), who was destined to be one of the greatest navigators. Thirty-seven years later there sailed down the Tagus four vessels under the command

of this same Vasco to try to find a sea-route to Cathay. He sailed southward for many weeks until he reached the Cape of Good Hope, which was rounded in safety. Nearly a year after he had left Portugal he reached Calicut, where he tried to establish Portuguese agents. He was, however, unsuccessful in this, owing to the opposition of the Mohammedan traders there. In September 1499 he returned to Portugal, where he was made "Admiral of India"—a strange-sounding title to our modern ears.

VASCO DA GAMA

Five years before Da Gama had set out on his first voyage Columbus had discovered the New World, and on the news of the discovery reaching Europe there followed such a stampede for exploration as the world has never known before or since. Da Gama, Magellan, Cabot, Cartier, Frobisher, Henry Hudson, Drake, and company made ocean tracks all over the Seven Seas. It was the Golden Age of Discovery, when most of the plums were gobbled up in the race to get there first. A few pieces of *terra incognita* were left for later explorers, and even to-day there are small parts of the earth's surface not mapped out. What will the explorers do when the North Polar ice-cap has been thoroughly investigated and the Antarctic Continent is a tourists' summer resort?

Magellan (1480–1521) was the first of these intrepid sailors to circumnavigate the globe, thereby confusing the school of dogmatists who still held out for a flat world with dreadful edges over which too venturesome navigators fell

into a bottomless abyss. Fernão de Magalhães, as Magellan was called in his own land of Portugal—another Portuguese—after many adventures in the service of his country in the Malay Archipelago and North Africa, sometimes on land, sometimes at sea, renounced his nationality through falling out of his King's graces, and offered his services to the King of Spain. Magellan had a plan to reach the East Indies by sailing westward, and he placed his project before the King. Spain's ruler just then happened to be the great Charles V. Charles, on going over Magellan's plan, clinched the matter by drawing up an agreement and furnishing Magellan with five ships for his voyage. In 1519 he left Seville, and after some delay put to sea. Magellan's own flagship was the *Trinidad*. It is interesting to notice that the astronomer Faleiro, who was going as joint captain with Magellan, cast his horoscope and thereupon decided to remain behind, the cast being against him.

MAGELLAN

Magellan was a level-headed man who knew all there was to know about navigation in his day, and who, having carefully estimated his chances of success, considered them good. And he proved to be right. Had he not been a man of indomitable will the voyage would have failed before he reached the strait which bears his name, for when his fleet wintered on the coast of Patagonia the crew mutinied, and only by Magellan's courage and leadership was the mutiny crushed. He called the natives hereabouts Patagonians, which means the "Big Feet," and his historian, with a Rabelaisian imagination, told a credulous Europe that Patagonia was the land of enormous giants.

Approaching the strait, the leader discovered the cape to which he gave the romantic name of the Cape of the Eleven Thousand Virgins. Presently they came to the eastern entrance of the strait, and for thirty-eight days the little fleet, now but four vessels, sailed westward through the narrow, tortuous passage, each day looking for the expected outlet. On the thirty-eighth day they reached the greatest of the earth's oceans, which was then called the Great South Sea, and Magellan, looking at the stark, mountainous land through which he had passed, named it Tierra del Fuego—the "Land of Fire"—because of the number of fires he saw on the hills around him. From here the forlorn armada set out on a voyage across the unknown ocean, and for ninety-eight days they had good weather, which caused Magellan, who seems to have had a fine *flair* for names, to christen this unmeasurable expanse of ocean the Pacific. After a voyage of over three months out of sight of land, and when the crew were starving to the point of eating the rigging, they sighted the Ladrones. The islands were so named (from the Latin *latro*, a robber) because of the thievish habits of the natives. In March 1521 Magellan brought his ships to the Samar Archipelago (later called the Philippines), and here the great navigator was murdered by the King of Cebu. Magellan had circumnavigated the globe by going to Asia around both of the great capes, the Hope and the Horn.

To Vasco Nuñez de Balboa (1475–1517) goes the honour of having first sighted the Pacific, though he cannot be considered a great navigator, unless his exploit of pioneering 190 men through the dangerous and unhealthy jungles of Yucatan can be considered as navigation. Balboa was an able leader and a wise governor, but certain jealous enemies were the means of getting him tried for treason, and on a false charge he was condemned to death and suffered that fate.

One of the leading lights among the select circle of early sixteenth-century explorers was Ferdinando de Soto (1500–42), a Spaniard. In 1528 he mapped out much of the eastern coast of Central America, and during the conquest of the Land of the Incas gathered a fortune of nearly 200,000 ducats. Returning to Spain, marrying, and setting up as a nobleman, he soon became restless and sold much of his property to raise a force and buy ships for another expedition. After four years of exploring the Floridas and looking for gold he came to the mouth of the Mississippi River. He died aboard his ship on that river the following year. He did not actually discover the Mississippi, because the delta had already been seen many years before, but De Soto was the first seaman to navigate the stream and penetrate far inland on its muddy waters.

JACQUES CARTIER

Jacques Cartier (1494–1552) was another member of that splendid company of seamen-adventurers. He was a Frenchman, and explored in his ship, the *Grande Ermine*, the rugged coast of Newfoundland, and while in the Gulf of St Lawrence he came upon the St Lawrence River. He made several voyages to America, hoping to discover a North-west Passage to India. Columbus had gone westward to reach the Land of the Moguls, but found that a continent lay directly in his path. The explorers that came after quite reasonably expected to sail around the barrier, for little did they know the immeasurable size of the great land mass that lay in their path, a mass reaching

without break almost from Pole to Pole. Though Cartier failed to find India, he did much valuable work for Francis I by exploring a great part of the coast and land that was later settled by the French.

Now we come to Drake (1540–96), a man of many parts. Among his major accomplishments was the distinction of being the first Englishman to sail around the world. At the early age of twenty-two he was made captain of the ship *Judith*, on which ship he took part in a sea fight under Hawkins in the Gulf of Mexico. Five years later he was roving about the Spanish Main with a privateering commission, looking for trouble. He had two ships, the *Pasha* and the *Swan*. He was later joined by a third vessel, and with this belligerent trinity he prowled about the Caribbean, searching for treasure to indemnify him for his losses on the former expedition. That he was successful we know. After sacking Nombre de Dios and carrying on the sort of sea and land warfare that was permitted in those rough times, he returned once more to England, this time loaded with treasure. Further exploits of a minor nature followed, and then came the voyage in the *Golden Hind* that put him among the first half-dozen of the greatest navigators in history. This expedition immortalized his name much more even than the creditable part he later took in the fight against the Armada. The plan was to go south to the Strait of Magellan and explore the South Seas. Great secrecy was observed in the preparation for the expedition. Only Drake's most loyal adherents knew of it, and among those was, of course, the Queen, who so much approved of Drake's plan that she lent him her powerful assistance in furnishing the means.

In November 1577 he started from Plymouth with five small vessels, the combined crews mustering but 166 men. The fleet consisted of the *Golden Hind* (100 tons burden, and commanded by Drake), the *Elizabeth* (80 tons, John Winter,

captain), the *Swan* (50 tons, John Chester, captain), the *Marigold* (30 tons, John Thomas, captain), and the *Christopher* (under Thomas Moon). This latter was a mere smack of 15 tons. On board the fleet were the framework and planking to make four pinnaces, to be built later. Drake seems to have taken great care to ensure the success of the expedition, as the list of stores, ammunition, and miscellaneous extras taken on board shows. Besides an ample supply of arms and ammunition, there were taken such 'luxuries' as would contribute to the health and contentment of his crews. Each ship had musical instruments aboard, and Drake's own quarters were sumptuously furnished, "whereby," as the old chronicler puts it, "the magnificence of his own country among all nations whithersoever he might come should be the more admired."

After passing through some heavy weather, so bad, in fact, that the *Golden Hind* had to have her main-mast cut away, they got into milder latitudes as they went south, and by Christmas they were recuperating and repairing their ships in a snug harbour between the island of Mogador and the African coast. Here they had a brush with some Moors, who mistook the explorers for Portuguese, which nearly wrecked the venture at the start, but after some skirmishing Drake's party were able to regain their ships in safety. At Cape Blanco, two weeks' sail farther south, the crews were landed for recreation and exercise. Next the fleet stopped at the island of Mayo, where Drake tried to buy from the Portuguese settlers a supply of goat's meat. Like the Spaniards, the Portuguese hated the English, and refused to supply the necessary provisions. Thereupon Drake landed a party of men to take by force if necessary what supplies were required; but the inhabitants had fled, carrying everything with them, and before parting had spoiled the water in the wells by throwing salt into them. Continuing the voyage southward, Drake fell in with a

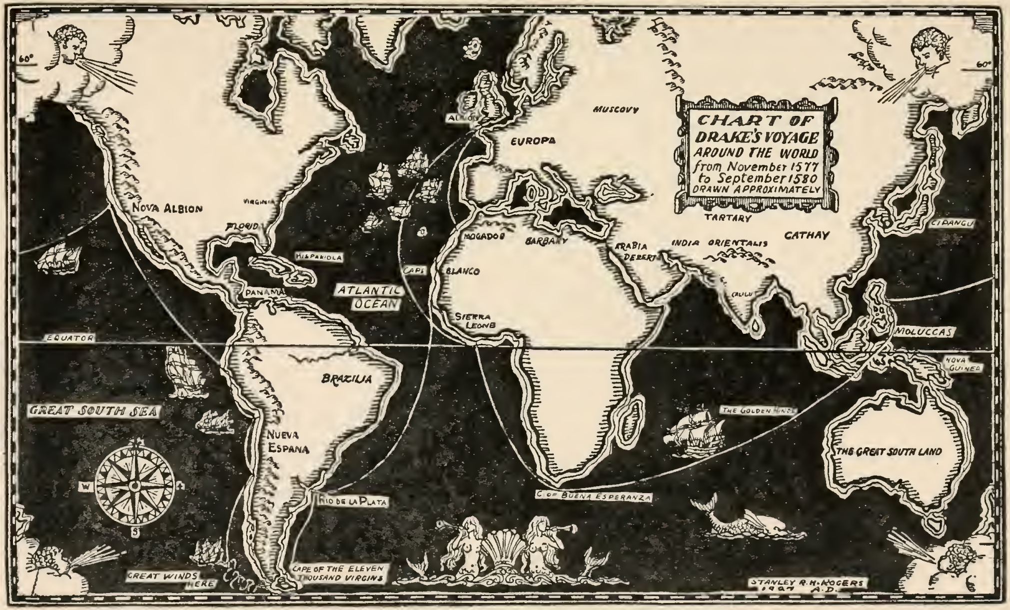


CHART OF
DRAKE'S VOYAGE
AROUND THE WORLD
from November 1577
to September 1580
DRAWN APPROXIMATELY
60°
60°
NOVA ALBION
VIRGINIA
FLORID
HISPANIOLA
PANAMA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
CAPE
ALBION
EUROPA
MUSCOVY
TARTARY
CATHAY
CIPANGU
MOGADOR
BARBARY
ARABIA DESERT
INDIA ORIENTALIS
CALICU
BLANCO
SIERRA LEONE
MOLUCCAS
NOVA GUINEA
EQUATOR
BRAZILIA
GREAT SOUTH SEA
NUEVA ESPANA
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S
GREAT WINDS HERE
CAPE OF THE ELEVEN THOUSAND VIRGINS
STANLEY R. H. ROGERS
1927 A.D.

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great Portuguese galleon, which he captured. He turned over the command of the prize to his friend Thomas Doughty, who had been acting as his lieutenant on the *Golden Hind.*

Doughty was found taking bribes from the prisoners, and keeping to himself the money so obtained; whereat Drake deprived him of his office and gave it to his brother, Thomas Drake. At the next calling-place the prisoners were released and given one of the pinnaces. The galleon was retained, as was also the Portuguese pilot, to guide them along the coast of Brazil. Crossing the South Atlantic, the little fleet were sixty-three days out of sight of land.

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

They tarried awhile to recuperate and refit at an anchorage up the river La Plata. Here the *Swan* was broken up in order to reduce the fleet, which Drake had found great difficulty in keeping together. Just after this the voyage was marred by the ugly incident of the trial by court martial of Thomas Doughty. He was charged with plotting mutiny, confessed, and was executed.

The Portuguese prize also was here broken up, and the fleet, now reduced to three, set sail for the most hazardous passage of their voyage.

On August 19, 1578, they sighted the Cape of the Eleven Thousand Virgins, and on the following day "the valiant and expert captaine," as Hakluyt calls him, led his fleet into the perilous Strait of Magellan. The ships were well handled, and made the passage safely, though not without many great dangers. On the sixteenth day after they had entered the Strait they beheld the mighty Pacific Ocean. Drake's aim was to discover if there was a passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and he therefore directed the

course northward, skirting the American coast for its whole length, a project almost impertinent in its temerity, for cruising six thousand miles along an uncharted coast is no common task. At first the voyage north was rapid and comparatively uneventful, the three ships *Golden Hind*, *Marigold*, and *Elizabeth* keeping well together. Then came a tragic event following a gale that drove them south and caused them to lose sight of one another. After some days of heroic endeavours to keep from foundering in the mountainous seas the *Golden Hind* and the *Elizabeth* got in touch, but the *Marigold* was never heard of again. The two ships were now back at the entrance to the Strait, and the superstitious crews thought that the storm demons of the Pacific meant to prevent them ever sailing north. While beating off the land those on board the *Golden Hind* noticed that the *Elizabeth* had entered the Strait, and concluded she had entered for a safe anchorage and would reappear later. As the days went by without any sign of her, Drake began to suspect that she had deserted, a surmise that proved to be correct. Against the desires of his crew Captain Winter had decided to leave the *Golden Hind* to her fate. The indomitable leader then turned northward again, but was driven farther south by the gale until he was able to run for shelter among the islands of Tierra del Fuego. Here came a mishap which resulted in Drake losing eight of his men. These eight seamen were in a shallop which was employed for exploring rivers and harbours, and during bad weather the shallop became separated from the mother ship. The small party of eight regained the mainland, where they had terrible experiences. Only one man of the party ever reached England again.

In the meanwhile Drake arrived at Valparaiso, where he took advantage of a "state of war" to capture a large treasure galleon lying in the harbour there. A vast quantity of gold was transferred to the hold of the *Golden Hind*

which then sailed northward, leaving the galleon behind, as Drake had not enough men to spare to navigate her. Farther north they captured another galleon by boarding, and more treasure was added to that already taken. To quote again from Hakluyt: [1]

> The course which Sir Francis Drake held from the haven of Guatulco in the South sea on the backe side of Nueva Espanna, to the North-west of California as far as fourtie three degrees: and his returne back along the said Coast to thirtie eight degrees: where finding a faire and goodly haven, he landed, and staying there many weekes, and discovering many excellent things and being offered dominion of the countrey by the Lord of the same, he tooke possession thereof in the behalfe of her Majestie, and named it Nova Albion.

Which brings us to the time when Drake reluctantly had to give up his cherished plan of finding a North-west Passage, and turned his ship's head seaward once more. To go southward would be to run into the Spanish hornets' nest he had stirred up—a suicidal thing to do. So the only remaining course was to cross the Pacific. Westward ho! The passage was made in sixty-eight days to the Philippines, thence to the Moluccas, where Drake was received hospitably by a native ruler, and the crew were able to get the antiscorbutics they so badly needed in the shape of fresh fruits. After several weeks among the hospitable islanders the Englishmen departed westward. Their next stopping-place was on a rock, which they struck one night on the passage to Java. On this rock their voyage nearly came to grief; but after heaving cargo and guns overboard the *Golden Hind* gently listed over and slipped into deep water, where the pious sailors gave thanks to their Maker for another peril overcome.

From Java to the Cape of Good Hope the passage was

[1] *The Principal Voyages of the English Nation*, vol. vii.

without incident. They weathered the Cape safely and sailed northward for Sierra Leone. Here the symptoms of scurvy were once more checked by the citron fruit they brought back to the ship.

Then, one day in the month of September 1580, the battered little vessel appeared in the harbour of Plymouth, the port she had sailed from nearly three years before, thus ending one of the most remarkable sea-voyages in history.

THE "GOLDEN HIND"

Drake's great contemporary Sir Martin Frobisher (1535–94) was another one of these early navigators with a great vision. His heart was set upon finding the North-west Passage to India; and after years of effort to arouse national interest in such an expedition he succeeded, with the aid of the Earl of Warwick, in getting three small vessels and equipping them. The largest vessel of his 'fleet' was of but 25 tons, a mere fishing-ketch in size. And with these he faced the unknown dangers of the Arctic Ocean. In the North Atlantic they lost the smallest of the three vessels, a 10-ton pinnace; and later the crew of the second vessel, the *Michael*, deserted with the ship. Like Drake, Frobisher pushed on alone and undaunted. Nearly two months after leaving England the forbidding coast of Labrador was sighted, in latitude 60° 2′ N. Several

weeks were spent exploring the coast, during which five of Frobisher's small crew were decoyed away by Eskimos and never heard of again. This was a short voyage, for we hear of the *Gabriel* (Frobisher's vessel) arriving in the London River but four months after he had left it.

His appetite was now whetted for a further voyage, and another expedition was planned on a more ambitious scale. A Company of Cathay was formed, with a charter from the Government, Queen Elizabeth lending a vessel, named the *Aid*, from the Navy. Frobisher was created High Admiral of all lands and waters discovered by him. He brought back 200 tons of ore to England from this expedition, to be assayed for traces of gold. Although nothing came of it, the faith of his supporters remained strong, and a third expedition presently sailed for the Land of Ice. The ore they collected from Labrador and Greenland on these expeditions proved worthless, but Frobisher's contribution to geographical knowledge, particularly his charting of the Arctic seas, was invaluable to future navigators. Later in life he distinguished himself at sea in the wars with Spain. At the siege and relief of Brest in 1594 he received a wound from which he died.

A great navigator was Henry Hudson (*d.* 1611), an Englishman, whose greatest exploit was accomplished in a Dutch vessel, the *Half-moon*. He was one of the great sailors who dreamed of a North-west Passage to China. He made four notable voyages. The first was done for the Muscovy Company, who bid him search for the legendary Passage. He skirted the coast of Greenland and the Great Ice Barrier to Spitzbergen to latitude 80° N. The following year the same company sent him on a voyage in the opposite direction—that is to say, by the north-east route to China, which had already been unsuccessfully attempted. Nor did he meet with better success: he was compelled to return on account of the ice.

In 1609 he undertook to captain a ship for the Dutch East India Company in a search for a shorter route to the Indies than the long passage around the Cape of Good Hope. Hudson was given *carte blanche* to sail in whichever direction he considered most likely to bring success. With a polyglot crew he left Texel in the *Half-moon*, a ship

destined to become famous. On June 15 (he had sailed in April) the *Half-moon* lost her fore-mast, and Hudson put into the Kennebec River, where his carpenters were able to fashion a new mast from a suitable tree felled near the shore. Coasting the New England shore southward, he stood into what is now New York Harbour; and while in that region sailed 150 miles up the broad river which bears his name. All the time he never lost sight of the purpose of the voyage, to find a passage to China. Finding that the Hudson River was not the long-searched-

for Passage, he returned to New York Bay, and from there weighed anchor for Holland. Arriving in the English Channel, he unfortunately put in at Dartmouth, where the authorities seized his ship and all Englishmen on board, bidding them serve their own country. He did not find the mythical straits that should lead him to China, but, like other great navigators, he brought back considerable new knowledge of the sea and land he had explored, and once for all discredited Hakluyt's story that there was a narrow isthmus in the north similar to the Isthmus of Panama in the south.

His fourth voyage, taken in the next year, was in an English ship, the *Discovery*, which had as its object the search for the North-west Passage. The winter was spent in the ice of the Hudson Bay, and here the leader had a quarrel with a rascally fellow named Green, who succeeded in inciting the crew to mutiny. Hudson and eight others, some of them ill, were put out of the ship. The mutineers sailed for England, and during the passage along the coast Green and several others were killed in a fight with Eskimos. The miserable remnants of the crew reached England, where they got what they so richly deserved. Of Hudson and his eight companions nothing was ever heard again.

These men, whose exploits we have merely touched upon, belong to the period of the early navigators. The Elizabethan age was particularly rich in great sailors, and one's mind flies to the names of Hawkins, Grenville, and even Raleigh. The last-named could not, however, be considered a great navigator, and Grenville was more distinguished as a naval officer than as an explorer. In looking through the old accounts, those of Hakluyt and the other chroniclers, one cannot help but feel that Drake's voyage round the world was, to say the least, among the greatest feats of navigation of his, or any other, time.

CHAPTER IV

The Later Navigators

THE geographical situation of England, which isolates her from the rest of Europe by a strip of water which is as a moat to a castle, has made it necessary for all Britons who want to reach other countries to put to sea. Until the coming of aeroplanes they had no choice but the sea-route when they wished to travel out of their own country, so it is not surprising that they have become a seafaring race. But they have not always been the leaders in navigation, for the Portuguese far outshone the Britons as explorers during the fifteenth century. England had not a Prince Henry the Navigator to stimulate an interest in exploration, and to the Portuguese must go the credit for sea-pioneering when the rest of the world did little more than follow timidly in their footsteps. But the day came when the English started to follow the sea-tracks of the Latin pioneers, and, like diligent pupils, they in time outstripped their masters. Even their hereditary enemies admitted that. But it was a Dutchman, Abel Janzsoon Tasman, who first brought the news to the Western World of the existence of the large islands in the South Seas hitherto unknown—New Zealand and Tasmania. He was born about 1603, but did not come into renown as a navigator until 1642, when he set out on his first expedition of importance. In the years previous to this he had made a voyage or two between Holland and Batavia, in the East Indies, spending some years as a captain in the service of the Dutch East India

Company, adding the while to his knowledge of Asiatic seas. He also explored the North Pacific, and charted parts of the Philippines.

Sponsored by the Dutch Colonial Governor, Van Diemen, Tasman started out with two ships, the *Heemskerk* and the *Zeehaen*, primarily to discover the extent of the "Great South Land," as Australia was then known. It had never been circumnavigated, and people said that this great continent extended to the South Pole. During the course of this expedition he sailed round the south of Tasmania without realizing that it was an island, a mistake it is not difficult to understand. This country he named Van Diemen's Land, in honour of his patron, the Governor. Sailing from there, he steered east for the Solomon Islands, and on the way came upon those twin jewels in the Pacific, the New Zealands, which at the time he named Staten Landt—*i.e.*, the Land of the States, the then familiar name for Holland. This voyage lasted ten months, and brought to the Dutch a great deal of exceedingly valuable geographical knowledge, besides new colonies. In 1644 Tasman made his second important voyage of exploration, and solved a problem that was exercising the minds of contemporary geographers—the problem of the Great South Continent. Did it extend to the South Pole or not? He proved it did not by establishing the continuity of the coastline. Thus he was the first navigator to circumnavigate Australia. And with true Dutch thoroughness he made soundings off the coast at intervals during the whole voyage, carefully noting them on the chart. In his later years he took part in several naval fights and survived to live the remainder of his life in rich and honourable retirement.

William Dampier (1652–1715), navigator and one-time buccaneer, was a great figure in English sea-pioneering, but there never was a stranger personality to fill such a *rôle*. He had the mind of a scientific observer, but lacked

those qualities of leadership that distinguished his contemporary, Captain Woodes Rogers. In his younger days Dampier lived the life of a buccaneer through his association with the logwood-cutters of Panama. But one cannot take Dampier the pirate seriously. His was not the nature for the bloodthirsty sea-rover, and it is not surprising that we read of him later making a step toward respectability by returning to England to take to himself a wife. But marriage seemed to make him more restless than ever, and soon he was at sea again, where he spent the next few years among companions whose self-styled privateering voyages were nothing less than common piracy. After some years of this sort of thing, during which time he made minute observations of everything he saw, he returned to England by way of the Indian Ocean, thus completing the circumnavigation of the globe. It is interesting to note that he crept ashore —unheralded, unseen, a stowaway.

For half a dozen years he stayed ashore, and during this time he wrote his famous journal, which ran into several editions. A second book, *A Discourse of Winds*, brought him such favoured notice that the Government gave him command of the ship *Roebuck*, twelve guns, for a voyage of scientific discovery to New Holland, as Western Australia was then called. The *Roebuck* reached the Antipodes, and Dampier made many valuable discoveries, but on the passage home the old ship leaked so badly that

Dampier stood toward the island of Ascension, but she foundered before she could be run ashore and took with her most of Dampier's journals. The leader and the crew were rescued and carried to England by a passing East Indiaman.

Dampier was again chosen to command an expedition—this time a privateering voyage, against the French and Spanish in the Pacific, in the *St George* and the *Cinque Ports*. This voyage was marred by quarrels among the crew—quarrels which Dampier seemed helpless to prevent. But he succeeded in making this his second voyage around the world. He lost both ships in the effort, but he had such thrilling tales of adventure to tell that even Queen Anne had him recount them to her.

His last voyage was in the capacity of pilot to Captain Woodes Rogers, who took the ships *Duke* and *Duchess* out to worry the Spanish in the West. The *Duke* was a 30-gun ship of 320 tons, and the *Duchess*, as becomes a lady, was slightly smaller than her consort, for she was only 260 tons and mounted but twenty-six guns. This voyage around the world with Woodes Rogers in command was successful, and not only did the *Duke* and *Duchess* reach England safely, but with their holds full of booty from the privateering ventures.

Dampier's title to fame is secure, notwithstanding his disappointing falls from grace. He possessed those subtle qualities which, though not easily defined, go in the sum to bring their possessor to the front and mark him as no common man. Less is heard of Captain Woodes Rogers than he deserves, but his talent as a leader and his personal courage were of as high an order as those of Drake. The exploits of Dampier and Woodes Rogers were in their later days closely linked together, but it was Rogers who supplied the dash, initiative, and genius

for command that brought the expedition to a successful conclusion.[1]

The *Duke* and *Duchess* were privately owned for privateering, which, as the name suggests, was a private enterprise sanctioned by the Government in time of war.

THE "DUKE"

The Treaty of Paris in the middle of the last century put an end to this licensed piracy.

Rogers kept a journal of this remarkable voyage, and it is mainly through this journal that his astounding exploits are known. Nor was he a braggart like Benvenuto Cellini, for his daily entries of even the most tremendous happenings are marked by a diffidence that would indicate a lack of imagination if we were not aware of the power of words that he could command. Like many of the earlier sea-adventurers, he started out in old ships in poor condition;

[1] For a fuller account of Dampier's voyages see the author's *Ships and Sailors: Tales of the Sea* (Harrap).

he, however, not only returned with his two ships in safety, but increased the pair to three by bringing with him the prize *Marquis*.

What an amazing business this privateering was! There you had a company of gentlemen adventurers contributing money toward the purchasing and fitting out of two vessels to go roving against enemy ships with the dual purpose of harassing the foe and lining their pockets. True, they had to have legal sanction with letters of marque, but they were to all intents and purposes pirates conducting private warfare. But the sporting spirit which these old sea-adventurers displayed makes one forgive them much, and one cannot help but be warmed to the wealthy nobleman who offers not only his money toward one of those expeditions, but himself also—for the love of adventure. The commander of the *Duchess* was a man of good birth and fortune who gave both his person and his money to the undertaking. Nor were these men who contributed money to the expedition disappointed, for it turned out to be one of the most successful expeditions that ever returned to England.

As we have already noted, Captain William Dampier accompanied Rogers. His nominal title, after the grandiose manner of the time, was "Pilot for the South Seas," and if he was not remarkable as a leader his other qualities and his experience in South American waters made him a very valuable asset to the expedition.

The two ships left Bristol in August 1708 bound for the dreaded Horn, which they reached in the following December after many diversions by the way. A Swedish ship was overtaken, and when Rogers refused to take any plunder, as she was not an enemy and carried no contraband cargo, some of his men mutinied. But the mutinous ones were ruthlessly put in irons, and that danger was averted. The old-time seamen were like naughty children, they soon

forgot; and after five days in the iron bracelets the troublesome ones were contrite enough to promise to be good, and so were released.

The voyage was a crowded period of sea-skirmishes, land attacks, taking of prizes, and putting of coast towns to ransom. But the whole affair was conducted with punctilious regard to the formalities, and Rogers won the respect of his men by the scrupulous division of all plunder, according to a written agreement which was drawn up to every one's satisfaction. Discipline, which was strict, made for happy ships, and there was no further serious trouble with mutiny. Religion, that solace of men which so often goes hand in hand with fire and sword, was not neglected, and prayers were read at regular intervals when other business did not prevent this observance.

In January 1709, after a perilous passage round the Horn, they made the island of Juan Fernandez. And the incident which followed upon their sighting the island is worth telling in detail. A boat's crew was sent off from the ships to go ashore, but before it could land night had fallen, and as those on the ships looked toward the island they saw a light appear on the shore. This was taken as a sign that some enemy vessels were at anchor there, and the boat's crew hurriedly returned to the *Duke*, while Rogers ordered the guns run out and both ships cleared for action. The next morning no ships were to be seen, and a yawl was sent full of armed men to reconnoitre. When they approached the shore a man clad in skins was seen running down the beach toward them. He was

brown and hairy, and spoke English, though with some difficulty, as a man long unused to speech. He made himself known as Alexander Selkirk, and said he had been on the island alone for nearly four and a half years. He was the master of the *Cinque Ports*—one of Dampier's ships—who had preferred to be put ashore rather than remain on board after a quarrel with his captain. Through the good offices of Dampier he was made second mate of the *Duke*.

THE BOARD-MEETING

From now on this belligerent couple, the *Duke* and *Duchess*, were frequently in skirmishes, and by April 5 two small coasters and the galleon *Ascension* were taken. But this was not enough, and a council of war was held on board, which resulted in the decision to attack the city of Guayaquil and extort a ransom in true buccaneering style. This voyage being a private enterprise, there is something suggestive of a company board-meeting about the council of war in the cabin of the *Duke*. Rogers, as the chairman, discusses with his co-directors the affairs of their limited company. It is decided that business is not brisk enough and something must be done or the shareholders will complain. So it is carried by unanimous vote that the thriving city of Guayaquil be plundered. And who is to say that these gentlemen in the cabin of the *Duke* were any worse than many of the sleek men of business who hold board-meetings on shore, with no risk at all to their persons?

So the attack was made, but with due observance of certain rules which were agreed upon beforehand. Some things were termed legitimate plunder, others were not, and that which it was forbidden to take included women's jewellery—a chivalrous gesture to the fair ladies of Guayaquil. There is something humorous about the complacent way these gentlemen sat in the cabin of the *Duke* and counted the Spanish chickens before they were hatched, and the way the citizens' property was solemnly divided by these tarry sailors before they had even sighted the city. The alarm was raised on shore before the privateers had landed, but this did not deter them, and after some parley the townsfolk agreed to pay a ransom of 30,000 pieces-of-eight, but not until the invaders had already laden their boats with plunder. What devils the English must have seemed to the Spanish and French of those days! Wherever the English sailors went they were invincible, until they became as great a terror to the Spaniards as the Spaniards were to the natives. The Latin races were not successful as colonists. Their idea of rule was to inspire fear without respect. The English reserve, with all its faults, has shown its virtue among native races, where respect is stronger than brute force.

When the galleon *Ascension* was captured she proved a disappointment, for her cargo was not such as appealed to the mercenary hearts of the attackers. Her holds contained no less than 500 bales of Papal bulls and a great number of small boxes each containing the sacred bones of

some saint duly labelled. This was an embarrassing cargo for such unholy men as the privateers, and, sad to tell, most of the bones were thrown overboard and the Papal bulls were lighted to burn the pitch off the ships' bottoms when they were careened ashore.

In December, while still in the Pacific, they captured the galleon known as "the Manila ship." After a hot fight, lasting, as Rogers put it, three glasses, the Spaniards hauled down their flag. The enemy had nine men killed, and though the English had only two wounded, one of these was Rogers himself, who seems to have been severely hurt. A bullet had gone through his face, carrying away part of his upper jaw, though he but casually mentions it in his journal.

Though very ill, he was not deterred from cruising in search of a larger galleon which he heard was about due from the Philippines. They presently sighted the Spanish ship, which was a large one of 900 tons, carrying sixty guns. The Spaniard proved a doughty fighter, and by fighting one at a time he managed to keep the smaller vessels of the English from boarding. After a seven-hour duel the galleon managed to draw away, the privateers being so badly damaged themselves that they desisted from any further attack. Here Rogers had part of his ankle shot away, but he remained on deck and commanded his ship through the remainder of the action.

With two large prizes renamed the *Marquis* and the *Batchelor*, the *Duke* and *Duchess* set a course across the Pacific, arriving at Java in the month of June, after a passage full of peril and hardship, with rotten provisions and leaking ships. Here one of the prizes was sold to the Dutch. The other three ships stood for the Cape, where they arrived in December in very poor condition, with their bottoms covered with barnacles and their sails and gear worn out. The last leg of the voyage from the Cape

of Good Hope to London was done in company of a convoy to safeguard the treasure they carried. London River was reached in October 1711 with ships and treasure safe, after one of the most successful privateering voyages ever made. The original cost of the expedition was about £14,000, and the profits, after all expenses were paid, amounted to nearly £200,000. Two-thirds of this went to the owners, and the rest was divided according to rank among the officers and crew. Captain Rogers's own share of the booty came to about £15,000. Though he bore the marks of his wounds for the rest of his life, he completely recovered from them, and after a short period of shore life in Bristol his active disposition sent him again to sea, where he set out to exterminate the pirates in the West Indies, a work which, while impossible of completion without the aid of a fleet, was not without considerable success. Not only did he capture many pirates, but he went one better, *he reformed some of them.*

He died at Nassau in the West Indies in 1732, after years of service for his country, which was not in his lifetime adequately appreciated.

Another great English navigator was Commodore George Anson (1697–1762), who took the famous *Centurion* around the world thirty-odd years after Woodes Rogers's voyage. With him were the 50-gun ships *Gloucester* and *Severn* and three smaller men-of-war, the *Pearl*, the *Wager*, and the *Tryal.* This was an expedition dogged, from the very start at Portsmouth, with ill-luck, and the later experiences of the crews were such as to make fiction blush for sheer modesty. To begin with, that incredibly short-sighted body of men known collectively as the Admiralty sent Anson, one of their most brilliant officers, on this voyage in old, leaky ships and with provisions unfit to eat. And then, at the last moment, the harassed commander was

supplied with 500 pensioners from Chelsea Hospital—men who had grown old and rheumaticky and who were mostly unfit for the hard life at sea. Half of them, it is true, deserted before the squadron sailed, but still, Anson had to take 250 men who were more fitted for sitting on a bench dozing in the sun than facing the rigours of a three-year voyage. Within a year all but six of these men were dead, and Anson had to carry on with insufficient crews, though the effects of this loss of men were lessened by a corresponding loss among the ships of the squadron. The loss of the 28-gun ship *Wager* is an epic in itself. This ship piled up on the rocky coast of Chile just after safely rounding the Horn, and of her crew only four men ever reached England—the rest having perished at the time of the wreck or by privation later.

GEORGE ANSON

Scurvy was the expedition's greatest enemy. Captain Cook had not yet arrived with his discovery of a scurvy prophylactic, and by the time the squadron had reached the coast of Brazil 160 men had died. Unfortunately for Anson, it was in the winter-time that they came up to the Horn, and even for those waters the weather was particularly stormy. For weeks the ships of the squadron beat off the Horn trying to edge westward, but two ships, the big *Severn* and the little *Pearl*, got such a hammering by the seas that, what with being partially dismasted and having most of their seamen ill with scurvy, they were forced to give up the struggle, turn about, and set a course for England.

Then came the loss of the *Wager*, which left but three of the original six ships to push northward. The avowed

purpose of this expedition was to give as much trouble to the Spaniards in the Pacific as possible. For two hundred years Spanish shipping was regarded as fair sport for men-of-war, privateers, and pirates. Spain had got there first, and her enemies, instead of fighting her in the malaria-infested swamps of Yucatan, waited for her fat galleons at sea and there stole the golden eggs. Drake started the fashion; Woodes Rogers took a hand in the business, and did well out of it. Now comes Anson, not as a privateer, but as a regular naval officer commanding a squadron of men-of-war on a raiding cruise with all the authority of the Government behind him. However, when he began his famous voyage he was forty-three, had seen many years' service in the Navy, and was known for a dogged, persevering man, as well as a strong disciplinarian. He was a man of simple tastes, and possessed a well-balanced character, though without any of that dash and impetuousness that often characterizes men of genius. Calm, determined, methodical, simple-hearted, courageous, and infinitely dependable, he was an ideal leader for the experiences he was called upon to face on this voyage.

THE "CENTURION"

On the passage up the west coast of South America the island of Juan Fernandez, a prearranged rendezvous and quite a respectable sized piece of land, was *missed*, and twelve days were spent looking for it, during which time some threescore men died who might have been saved had it not been for this delay. Of her original crew of over 500 barely more than 200 remained, many of these being too sick to aid in carrying on the work of the ship.

At Fernandez the sloop *Tryal* presently appeared, nor was she in any better condition than the flagship, for half her crew had perished. For the nonce all thought of the original purpose of the expedition had to be put aside until the forlorn company recuperated. While the *Centurion* and the *Tryal* lay at Juan Fernandez the *Gloucester* arrived, but in such a wrecked and hardly navigable condition that she was not at first recognized. Nearly three-quarters of her crew had perished, and those left alive were unfit for duty. It has been necessary to dwell on these misfortunes in order that we may the more fully understand the quality of courage and perseverance of Anson, who never wavered in his intention of leading his fleet against the enemy, notwithstanding his crippled condition.

While repairing both ships and men at Fernandez a Spanish ship hove in sight, and the *Centurion*, giving chase, captured her without fighting. Thus encouraged, the three ships *Gloucester*, *Tryal*, and *Centurion*, reinforced by the prize, manned by an English crew, pursued their course northward. Singly or together they fell in with enemy ships and took three prizes, and on to one of these was transferred the crew of the *Tryal*, which was then destroyed, as she had become unseaworthy. The most important event of this part of the voyage was the taking of the town of Paita, without bloodshed and with the capture of a great quantity of treasure. Anson's squadron cruised along this coast for many months, sailing as far north as Acapulco, in Mexico, and taking many prizes meanwhile. But the most alluring prize of all was still untaken—the treasure galleon which sailed annually from Manila for Acapulco, where the rich cargo was unloaded and carried overland to the eastern coast and there put on board another galleon destined for Spain. The life of Anson's men on these tropical shores and at sea had now changed from starvation, sickness, and death to fighting, plundering, and celebrating.

For months there had been plenty of each, and every man had his private store of treasure, from the commander downward. The squadron had waited for the treasure-galleon until Anson decided he could wait no longer, so, setting his prisoners free and burning his prizes, he set sail across the Pacific with his two ships, the *Centurion* and the *Gloucester*—all that was left of the original squadron. His reason for destroying the prizes was that there were not enough English seamen left to man them. Out in the illimitable wastes of the Pacific Ocean a terrible storm

overtook the two vessels, and the *Gloucester* became so waterlogged, and her spars and rigging so badly damaged, that she had to be abandoned after the crew and treasure had been taken off and the ship set on fire. So the *Centurion* was left to carry out her commission alone, the sole survivor of the squadron that had set out from England over two years before. The *Centurion* was little better off than the *Gloucester* had been. She was leaking badly, her gear was worn and rotten, and her crew were only saved from perishing of scurvy by the arrival of the ship at one of the Ladrone Islands, where they went ashore to recuperate. While Anson, also ill with scurvy, was ashore the *Centurion's* cables parted during a gale, and she was blown out to sea. For three weeks the marooned commander and his men waited gloomily for their ship, which each man had secretly given up for lost. But the skeleton crew on board, after incredible difficulties, brought the

ship back to the anchorage, when Anson lost no time in getting on board.

The story of this historic voyage nears its end. As soon as his crew was sufficiently recovered the commander put to sea and sailed eastward for the Canton River. At Canton he was only able to purchase supplies for the ship after much diplomacy, tinged with a hint of force; but once this was accomplished he sailed for the Philippines on his quest of the galleon.

Arriving at Cape Espiritu Santo, Anson cruised just out of sight of the land for weeks and eventually the galleon appeared. After a short action she was taken, and proved to be all that was expected of her as a rich prize. She was the *Nuestra Señora de Covadonga*, a large ship carrying 500 men and treasure worth over £300,000. After selling the prize at Macao the *Centurion* sailed for England, loaded with the spoils of her amazing voyage. She arrived at Portsmouth in June 1744 after an absence of four and a half years.

Men remember their bright days and forget the dark ones; so all the tragedies of the voyage seem to have been forgotten by the little band of the *Centurion's* survivors, who paraded triumphantly through the streets of London in the procession of wagons loaded with the treasure they had brought home. There were great celebrations, and it is told that the wealth the officers and men divided between them amounted to thirty wagonloads of gold and silver.

And what of Anson? Though the reasons for his voyage were not the nobler motives of an explorer, yet he must be recognized as a great navigator. He had not Drake's fiery dash or Nelson's genius; but he possessed qualities that must always command our highest respect—the courage, the dogged determination, kindliness of spirit, and devotion to duty which carried him to success where a lesser man would have failed.

Among the eighteenth-century navigators whose names come to one's mind there is Bougainville (1729–1811), the first Frenchman to circumnavigate the world, who wrote an account of the voyage that is almost unique among such literature in that it is tinctured with a sense of humour. Bougainville was born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth, and met good fortune all his days, a thing that cannot be said of his compatriot, the ill-fated La Pérouse, who figured in the greatest sea-mystery of the eighteenth century while on a voyage of exploration in search of the North-west Passage. His ships and their entire crews completely disappeared as if the sea had swallowed them up. But that is a story that belongs elsewhere. There was also the great English navigator George Vancouver (1758–98), who contributed his full share to the geographical knowledge of the world, particularly with regard to the west coast of North America, by making a careful survey from 35° N. to 56° N.—that is to say, approximately from Lower, or Spanish, California to the beginning of the Alaskan coast—a noteworthy performance.

This brings us to the greatest of all the eighteenth-century seamen, Captain James Cook (1728–79). The mere list of his achievements is bewildering. A map of the world that lies before me showing Captain Cook's different voyages gives the sea-tracks of an indefatigable navigator, for he seems to have been everywhere. Up through the Behring Strait and into the Arctic Ocean he went. The map is a chaos of lines—the track of the *Resolution*. In the South Pacific and the South Atlantic the fair colouring of the chart is quite spoiled by the crazy criss-crossing of lines that mark Cook's different voyages. And the same thing applies to other waters on the chart. Cook was ubiquitous.

His fame as a navigator was gained entirely through his

own efforts. He was born poor, and rose through the ranks by sheer merit, in spite of the handicap lowly birth imposed on promotion in the Navy in those past days. Born in Yorkshire in 1728, he was the son of a labourer, and at the age of twelve he ran away to sea, having no taste for the grocer's trade to which he was apprenticed. At sea he sailed first in collier brigs until he entered the Navy as an able seaman. After four years as a seaman he obtained a master's warrant. He was at the siege of Louisberg, and afterward did valuable service in the wars against the Indians in Canada. He took soundings of the St Lawrence, and aided General Wolfe. He surveyed Newfoundland, made charts of the Gulf of St Lawrence which are still used, and published sailing directions for seamen. This labourer's son did so much valuable scientific work in Canada that he was steadily promoted in rank. His work as a scientist and navigator so commended him to the powers that be that in 1768, shortly after he had returned from Canada, he was chosen to take out an expedition to the Pacific to observe the transit of Venus, being forthwith given the rank of lieutenant and command of the barque *Endeavour*. With his party of scientists he sailed first to Otaheite, where Venus was duly observed. This object being accomplished, Cook, according to instructions, made a voyage of exploration round Australasia, where he discovered many hitherto unknown islands before returning home in 1771. The heavy mortality among Cook's men through scurvy on this first voyage round the world impressed him with the need of a preventive remedy,

CAPTAIN COOK

and so led him later to finding a cure in the form of green vegetables as part of the diet of his crew.

At home he was soon busy planning a fresh expedition to the Pacific, and within less than half a year after his return he sailed, under the Government's ægis, in command of the ships *Resolution* and *Adventure*, bound for the South Pacific to discover the truth of the legend of a great south continent, the Terra Australis Incognita, a problem that had been exercising men's minds for a century. It was said that there was a great continent in the South that held fabulous riches and covered one quarter of the entire globe, and Cook's instructions were to settle the question once and for all. Profiting by his former disastrous experiences with scurvy, he took with him all sorts of provisions that he knew by experience to be anti-scorbutics.

The expedition sailed in July 1772, and bore southward for the Cape of Good Hope, which was reached in October. The ships were provisioned for two and a half years, and carried the frames and plankings of two small portable vessels. Cook's own ship, the *Resolution*, was a small vessel of 462 tons, and had a crew of 112 men. Though ship-rigged, she was, because of her small tonnage and light armament, called a sloop, according to the prevailing custom. She was well equipped with scientific apparatus, having special workshops and science rooms fitted on the main deck. But what a crowded little vessel she must have been! Besides stores sufficient for a voyage lasting years, there was a veritable farmyard of live bullocks, cows, ewes, goats, and fowls accommodated in pens on the decks.

Proceeding southward from the Cape, Cook most thoroughly searched for the *terra incognita* of the old explorers by cruising for over two years in the South Pacific, South Atlantic, and Indian Oceans, sometimes sailing south of the Antarctic Circle. This voyage lasted three

years, and extended from the palm-fringed atolls of the Pacific to the regions of eternal ice. The voyage was most fruitful in its contribution to human knowledge, especially in the discovery of a prevention and cure of scurvy, a disease which had in the past brought so many explorers

COOK IN THE SOUTH SEAS

to grief, and for this contribution to the cause of humanity Cook was duly honoured on his return home. It is not necessary here to follow the intricate track of his voyage. Its main object was accomplished, the Great South Continent myth was exploded, and in addition many of the nebulous contours of the existing maps were redrawn in a more positive form.

Cook had sailed round the world in the region of the Antarctic Circle, and had reached farther south than any

previous navigator; he had met the Great Ice Barrier, had seen the remarkable prehistoric survivals called penguins, had conquered the plague of scurvy, and, as I have said previously, added much new territory to the map. While Anson lost hundreds of men through scurvy, Cook lost only one, which is sufficient testimony to the value of his antiscorbutic discovery. He had achieved more than any other man of his time. He had risen to a position of the highest respect among his fellows, and though not commensurate with the value of his services, rewards came to him. The Royal Society elected him a Fellow, and awarded him the Copely Gold Medal for his scurvy-prevention discoveries. The Admiralty appointed him to a post at Greenwich Hospital, with a house and a fixed income. But Cook, though happily married, could not settle down to a life ashore, and in July 1776 was at sea once more—this time in command of an expedition to discover, if possible, the existence of a navigable North-west Passage. This quest had been a recurring fashion ever since the days of Cabot, when sailors dreamed of a short route to Cipango and the Indies. The long passage south to either of the two great Capes was the only known route to the East.

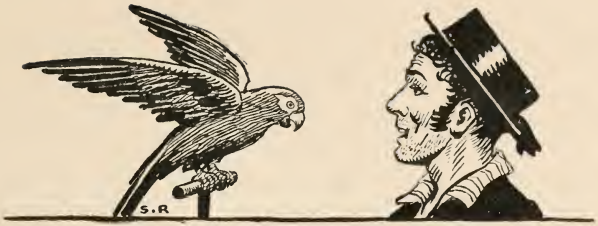
COOK IN THE ANTARCTIC

The *Resolution* was again commissioned, and accompanying her was the *Discovery*, a sloop of 300 tons.[1] Cook's orders were to proceed to the Cape of Good Hope, and, after searching for some rumoured islands in the Indian

[1] On the last expedition the *Resolution* had lost touch with her consort, the *Adventure*, early in the voyage, and the two never resumed touch, the *Adventure* returning to England alone in 1774.

Ocean, to sail to New Zealand, and thence to Otaheite, which we now call Tahiti. From there he was to cross the Pacific to New Albion, now the coast of California, and explore any rivers or inlets on the western coast of America that might communicate with the Atlantic! With our modern knowledge of the North American Continent such an idea seems fantastic. However, those were Cook's orders, and he most faithfully carried them out. The winter was to be spent at some harbour at Kamchatka, and in the spring he was to prosecute his search for the North-west Passage. In the summer of 1778 the two ships passed through the Behring Strait into the Arctic, and northward beyond the Arctic Circle until they came to ice, which prevented further progress. Though the North-west Passage was not found, over 1200 leagues of coast had been surveyed before the expedition turned southward again. Toward the end of the year Cook reached the island of Hawaii, where, owing to misunderstandings with the natives, the tragedy occurred that cost the commander his life. When an armed party went ashore to recover from the natives a boat stolen from the *Discovery*, a fight took place on the beach, with the unhappy sequel we know so well.

Cook was in the first rank of the great navigators of the world, and contributed more than any other man to maritime knowledge. As a man his character was what you would expect it to be. Austere, resolute, fearless, and taciturn, and feeling no physical hardships, he was an ideal type for his work in life. Though much respected, he had but few friends, for he did not need them. He stood alone, as he had risen alone, without assistance. Strong men of his type are not usually lovable, but they are the salt of the earth. As for the value of his voyages, apart from his service to humanity in eradicating the curse of scurvy, his surveys were an inestimable boon to all who followed him on the sea.



CHAPTER V

Sea Language

SEA language does not necessarily mean bad language, despite the testimony of sailors' parrots. By sea language I refer to all words or phrases concerning the sea and ships which are expressed in a sailor's terms. In the literature of the sea the landsman comes upon words about the meaning of which he is uncertain. Usually he is forced to remain ignorant because the average dictionary is not also a compendium of sea-terms.

Nautical language is so frequently mishandled by the landsman author that a sailor cannot read his books without a feeling of nausea. Conrad, in *The Mirror of the Sea*, takes this very natural ignorance so much to heart that he passes caustic comment upon those people who commit the lubberly crime of saying 'cast the anchor.' Nor is he without justification. An anchor is a tolerably hefty trinket, and it would require a quite mythical power of muscle to lift up, say, a ship's bower anchor and 'cast' it overboard. You may cast a boat adrift, or you may, in fact, 'cast adrift' anything that is lashed; but the phrase must remain intact. The anchor is 'let go' when, shackled to its chain, it is allowed to drop to the bottom of the harbour, or wherever the ship may be when the order to 'let go' is given. On the other hand, when the process is reversed and the anchor is raised from the bottom and

brought up to the bows of the ship, it is ' weighed.' You do not heave or lift or raise, you ' weigh ' anchor. The old Anglo-Saxon mariners used the word *woeg*. Beware of confusing ' weigh ' and ' way ' when the two are used in a nautical sense. Just as the nautiçal ' weigh ' does not mean to set your anchor on a pair of scales, ' way ' does not bear any relation to direction or route or manner. Nautically, ' way ' simply means *momentum*; thus, ' headway,' ' lose way,' ' gather way,' ' stern-way,' and so on. As with most rules, there are, however, exceptions, such as ' gangway,' ' way aloft,' and the ' ways,' which last refers to the baulks of timber on which a vessel is launched.

But pedantry can be carried too far, and it is being too meticulous when ships' officers are moved to complain publicly, as they have done, against the use of the phrase ' boat train.' A train is, after all, a landsman's possession, and he can give it what name he pleases. He is not interfering with maritime nomenclature. The sailor's objection is that those fast trains that rush to the pier-head with passengers are not coming to a boat, but to a ship. Therefore, forsooth, they should be called ' ship trains '!

There are those with a natural instinct or feeling for the right word who quite properly laugh at rules, and there is the irritating pedagogue who has right on his side, but, like Shylock, is an unpleasant fellow. An old shellback may say ' starn ' for ' stern,' ' stabbud ' for ' starboard,' ' t'gant ' for ' topgallant,' and so on; but for a landsman to use the shellback's pronunciation would smack of affectation. Yet where are we to begin or leave off? Some of us don't care a brass farthing, but it is for those who do that we have gone to the trouble of stopping a moment to think upon the matter.

One thing is certain: we—that is, landsmen—must say ' bows ' and not ' front,' ' stern ' and not ' end,' ' cabin,'

not ' house,' ' shrouds,' not ' rope ladders.' And, to carry the thing a little further, why should we say ' right ' and ' left side ' when ' starboard ' and ' port ' are equally expressive and infinitely more fitting? It is confessedly difficult. Each must choose for himself, but the wise will have the courage to prefer the right word to another which may be both clumsy and incorrect.

When one comes upon nautical solecisms in novels one wonders why the writer has not taken the trouble to have the matter read over before trusting it to the critical eyes of his readers. Your seafaring man is a merciless critic when it comes to violating his sacred nomenclature, and it is likely that the present author will hear anon from some retired mariner of the Chile nitrate fleet, or from one who was an apprentice on a wool clipper, taking exception to some statement on the ground of its inaccuracy. For such challenges we are prepared. When Allan Cunningham wrote " A wet sheet and a flowing sea " he little thought that salt-water critics would demand to know precisely what was meant by those words. Another risk of causing the criticism of the pedantic arises when using both British and American nautical terms in the same book. Many words for the same thing differ in the two marines, especially in the old whaling-ships, and to propitiate both sides of the Atlantic equally one would have to write or speak bilingually, as it were. But there is something to be said for the critics when they raise a voice to

THE TOP

heaven in protest against some glaring inaccuracy in a painting of a ship. For somehow a picture can be more concrete than words. You have the thing before you. It shouts; it hits you in the eye; it offends (or pleases) half the senses. And the plea of artist's licence will not pass. Your ship may be on the horizon—so far away that all details are lost, but its *character* will remain.

The profile of a barque cannot be confused with that of a brig, and double topsail yards did not exist in Nelson's day. Artist's licence has our sympathy, but a ship can be made navigable without loss to art. Half the sea-stories of the world are illustrated by impossible ships. Fantastic galleons that would capsize in a puff of wind; sails and yards without enough running rigging to work them; deckhouses, hatches, companions, and boats stuck in impossible places; frigates resembling clippers, and clippers resembling frigates—there is no end to them.

BARQUE AND BRIG

And even the *ci-devant* experts are sometimes caught napping. Not so long since the Spanish Government presented the British Government with a large model of the *Santa Maria*—a model most exquisitely wrought. Its perfect workmanship filled a craftsman's heart with despair at his own poor efforts. But, mark you, when the model was seen by the experts at South Kensington, where it is housed, they found fault with it. Not glaring faults, but still, faults were there, and the hawk eyes of the naval architects and riggers at once spotted the bobstay on the *Santa Maria*—that heavy stay of rope or chain which holds down the bowsprit. And the point is that in Columbus's time ships did not carry bobstays. They came into fashion a long time after, when the lengthening of bowsprits necessitated the bobstay to take the added strain. A little

matter perhaps, but it did not escape the vigilance of the experts.

For the sake of convenience sea language may be divided into three classes:

Technical—that is, terms relating to wind and weather, the working of a ship, and the ship herself.

Colloquial—that is, the nautical slang dictionary.

Romantic, by which is meant the evolution of sea language and the picturesque terms coined by seafaring men.

One of the commonest expressions met with in deep-sea literature is the phrase 'running her easting down.' Between the parallels of 40° and 60° S. a westerly gale can be counted on practically every day of the year, and so these latitudes are known as the 'Roaring Forties.' Consequently, when a sailing-ship gets into the Roaring Forties she keeps in them between Australia and the Horn, and so runs her easting down.

Quite the opposite to the Roaring Forties are the 'trade winds,' those gentle breezes that blow steadily in the region of the Torrid Zone from the north-east. They are the delight of the sailor, and once in the 'trades' he can count upon pleasant, lotus-eating days. In the trades he can bring out his scrimshaw work and sit on the steady deck while the ship almost sails herself.

In the time of Columbus seamen thought if they got into the trades they could never return; they believed they were a wind sent by the devil to blow them over the edge of the world. It seldom rains in the latitude of the trades: the sea is so smooth the Spaniards called it the Golfo de las Damas—the "Ladies' Sea." The English spoke of the trade winds because they helped ships trading with the West Indies. Once in the trade latitudes one could depend on a quick and safe passage. The region of calms near the Equator where the trade winds die down to nothing

is known as the Doldrums. Here the atmosphere is close, hot, and depressing. Sailing-ships were frequently becalmed for weeks in this region, while the crews suffered in spirits from inertia and utter boredom. In the Doldrums they got what the French in Algeria call the *cafard*—an extreme state of mental dispiritedness.

Also in the Atlantic in the vicinity of the West Indies is the ill-famed Sargasso Sea—the Mar de Sargaco, or "Sea of Seaweed," first noticed by Columbus in 1492. Sailors once thought that ships were held in this mass of floating weeds until their crews died of starvation; but the truth is that this phenomenon of floating vegetation is not dense enough to impede the progress of any ship when she has wind or other power to drive her along.

Again, there are the 'storm-winds,' the monsoons and typhoons of Eastern waters, the pamperos and the hurricanes and equinoctial gales of the Atlantic. The monsoon, about which travellers in the P. and O. ships are wont to talk, is the seasonal wind in certain parts of the Indian Ocean, and can blow to some violence. The typhoon is, of course, a more serious matter. It is a cyclone at sea, a hurricane of the Asiatic waters, and is chiefly experienced near the Philippines and off the China coast. A typhoon will put the fear of God into the heart of any sailor, and a ship that can weather a typhoon is a stout ship indeed. The Arabs, by the way, call it *tufan*, and the Chinese *t'ai fung*.

In waters nearer home there are the equinoctial gales—which are commonly thought to occur at the time of the equinox, but actually during the period of the equinoxes there is no evidence of the gales being more prevalent than at other times of the year. But the idea is fixed in the heads of travellers, and many a timid transatlantic voyager hesitates to make the crossing during the equinoctial period.

The pampero is really a land wind. It is a cold wind that blows across the great plains of the Southern Argentine and out over the Atlantic sufficiently far to raise a heavy sea in the track of ships running off that part of South America.

The terms 'sea' and 'seas' have a variety of uses. A sailor never says 'wave' or 'waves,' he speaks of 'seas.' A sea may be rolling toward you—that is a 'head sea.' One at the side is a 'beam sea'; then the ship rolls. And a sea coming up astern is a 'following sea'; then your ship tosses, and it is a point of debate among sea-sick travellers which of the two sorts of motion—rolling or pitching—is the less agonizing.

The 'windward' side of a vessel is the side from which the wind comes. Look into the wind, you look to windward. The side away from the wind—*i.e.*, always the lower side when a ship heels over—is the 'leeward.' It it on the lee side—*i.e.*, the sheltered side of a ship—that a small boat approaches to come alongside, when, for instance, the pilot comes on board. Also, when possible, boats are launched on the lee side—this, of course, only when the seas make the coming alongside of a boat to windward dangerous. On steamers the smoke blows to leeward, and the cook's assistants always look at the smoke before dumping kitchen refuse overboard. To dump it to windward would be a lubberly thing to do.

But 'lee' has several other meanings, as in 'on a lee-shore,' a shore upon which the wind is blowing. Many a hapless ship has left her bones on a lee-shore. But 'under the lee of the land' means another thing. Here you are virtually sheltered by the land. The term 'lee' is one of the most used words in sea language. There is a 'lee tide,' a tide under the lee, and who has not heard of 'lee-boards,' those flat boards let over the side of a barge when a temporary keel is wanted? For a keel, it is

understood, grips the water and prevents the boat making too much 'leeway.'

Lee-board reminds us of 'larboard,' the old word for 'port.' The latter term was substituted for larboard because, being similar in sound to 'starboard,' it often led to dangerous mistakes when orders were given in a howling gale.

'Starboard' is the right-hand side when looking forward, and at night a green light is shown on that side. 'Port,' the left-hand side looking forward, is distinguished by a red light. These red and green lights were unknown in Nelson's day, and were not, in fact, introduced until the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Before this time a light was simply carried on the fore- or main-mast, though the huge poop lanterns were light enough for any ship.

The custom of measuring time at sea—not by hours, but by 'bells'—is an ancient one. Woodes Rogers refers to time as "glasses." "After three glasses" means during the time the sand-glass has been turned over three times. As the sand took half an hour to run through, three glasses would be an hour and a half. In the old days a boy was stationed to turn the glass over every half-hour, at the same time striking a bell. As a watch was four hours long, the glass was turned over eight times. At the end of the first half-hour the bell was sounded once, at the first hour twice, and so on. The last watch of the day on British ships was from 4 to 8 P.M.; and this is divided into two halves called 'dog-watches'—the first and second dog-watch. The reason for this is so that the watch will be changed every day, to prevent the same lot of men having to take the middle watch every night. It can all be worked out on a sheet of paper.

A nautical expression that one frequently comes across is 'offing.' The sea outside a harbour, away from the

shore, is the offing. To ' keep a good offing ' is to keep a safe distance from the shore. When a gale is blowing toward the land every mariner in his senses gives the land (that is, in this case, a lee-shore) a ' wide offing '—the wider the safer.

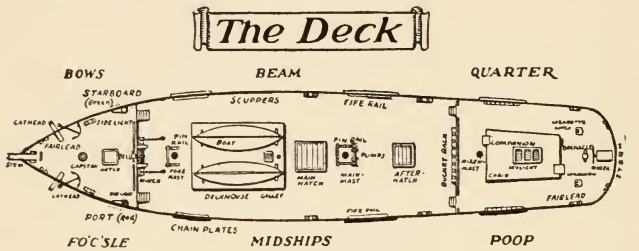
Some of the most disastrous wrecks in the annals of the sea were those where ships were blown on a lee-shore. The East Indiaman *Halswell*, which in 1785 was blown ashore near St Alban's Head, Dorset, with the loss of 166 lives, is an historic example of a ship getting on to a lee-shore. The *Halswell's* crew fought the gale for four days while the sails were blown out of the bolt ropes and the spars went by the board. Under jury rig they tried to ' claw off ' the land; they let go the sheet and bower anchors, but they broke out, and the ship struck the rocks in the dark, while the sea was running too high to launch the boats. Out of the 240 that had sailed no fewer than 166 were drowned. That is how deadly a lee-shore can be to a ship so unfortunate as to get too close to it!

People often speak of a ' voyage ' when they mean a ' passage,' for a voyage is a round trip, as it were—around the world or, say, to Australia and back. That is a voyage. But to Australia only is a passage. You cross to New York, you've made a passage; you cross and return, you've made a voyage.

The term ' weather ' has a wealth of meaning to a sailor. The ' weather side ' of a ship is the side from which the wind comes—*i.e.*, to windward; to ' weather another ship ' is to pass her on her windward side. To ' weather the storm ' is to pass safely through it; but to ' weather a gale ' is to lie to in a gale. There are about twenty different uses for this word alone in the language of the sea.

To ' lie to ' is, of course, to ride out a gale with the ship pointing into the wind; but to ' broach to ' in the same gale is to have the ship lying broadside on to the

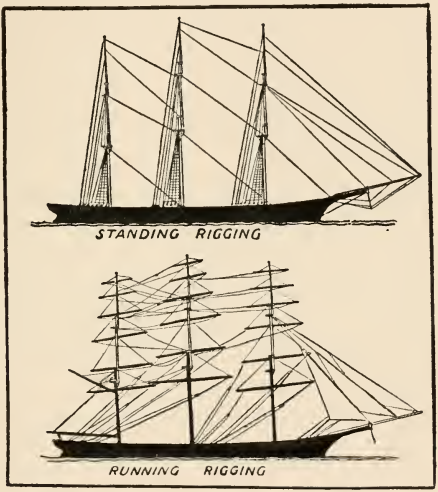
wind. To broach to in a gale through a lost rudder or bad seamanship is to be in a position of extreme peril. Your ship may be thrown on her beam-ends, when the only thing that can save her is to cut away the masts—an operation which, by the way, does not consist in hacking away at the masts themselves but at the lanyards of the shrouds—in other words, the stays that support the mast. Naturally, in such an emergency it is the weather shrouds that are cut.



Concerning the ship herself, how many of us have not the least inkling of the meaning of some of the words we use! The old limerick telling of the young lady named Bianca which concludes with the edifying command to "haul up the main sheet and spanker" is more naughty than nautical. We read of 'scuppers,' the 'weather bow,' 'lee beam,' 'cross-trees,' 'peak halliards,' the 'break of the poop,' the 'cuddy,' 'fo'c'sle-head,' and so on, without always being clear as to their meaning; and they are to the landsman as Burns is to the Sassenach—he is content to let the details go if he can follow the story.

The middle part of a ship's deck is the 'waist,' the 'bows' are either side forward, the 'quarters' are either side abaft the beam, the 'beam' being the middle section. The 'poop' is the raised deck aft where the compass and steering-wheel are situated. The poop is sacred to the

officers. The ' fo'c'sle ' is the forward deck, and on most ships is raised above the main deck. ' Scuppers ' are openings in the bulwarks to carry off the water coming on board. The ' spanker ' is the fore-and-after sail on the mizen. It is also known as the ' driver.' The ' trucks ' are the circular wooden caps at the heads of the top-masts,



or poles. On large men-of-war they were big enough for a sailor to stand on, and this was a feat that was sometimes performed by dare-devil fellows who knew not the meaning of vertigo.

A ' jury rudder ' is a temporary one rigged up when the ship's rudder is lost in bad weather. A similar meaning applies to ' jury masts ' and ' jury rig.' The ' tops ' are the platforms at the heads of the lower masts.

A ' sheet ' (why, I don't know) is a rope attached to a sail, but ' stern sheets ' is the floor-covering in the stern of

a small boat. Incidentally, the word 'rope' is seldom used by sailors. Instead they speak of 'gear,' 'halliard,' 'brace,' 'tack,' 'sheet,' 'stay,' 'lanyard,' 'shroud,' 'ratline,' 'gasket,' 'line,' 'painter,' and so on, according to what rope they are referring to.

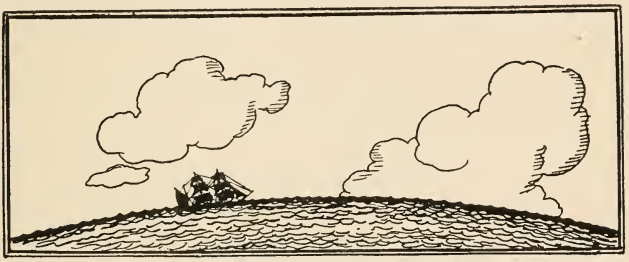
The 'catheads' are heavy timbers projecting from either bow to which the anchor is secured, and probably are so called from the custom of carving their outer ends with the head of a leopard or conventional cat. The 'standing rigging' is that rigging which stays the masts and bowsprit. The 'running rigging,' on the other hand, is the cordage which works the sails and yards and runs through blocks. 'Studding sails,' or 'stunsails,' is the term used to indicate extra canvas from booms run out at the ends of the yards on square-rigged ships. The 'cuddy' is a small cabin or the cookhouse. The 'companion' is the covering to the staircase entrance which leads below.

STUNSAILS

A 'marline-spike' is a pointed instrument employed for separating the strands of rope before making a splice. 'Belaying pins' are short lengths of wood or iron to which running rigging is belayed—*i.e.*, made fast. They were also useful in the bad old days to hard-case mates as weapons with which to break the hearts of men. 'Belay-

ing-pin soup' and 'handspike hash' were said in more than jest.

The 'taffrail' is the railing round the stern, but the 'fife-rail' is a bar or rail to which a row of belaying pins is fixed. 'Deadeyes,' from the Tudor 'dead men's eyes,' are the round blocks through which the lanyards at the base of the shrouds are rove. When steel rigging came into fashion deadeyes went out, and a less picturesque but highly practical invention called 'turnbuckles,' or 'riggings



HULL DOWN

screws,' took their place. 'Spun yarn' is a species of string made by twisting old rope fibres. The 'binnacle' is the stand and case containing the compass. The 'booby hatch' is the raised structure with a sliding top by which entrance to the cabin is gained.

Sea language is rich in colloquial terms which are far more expressive than the more academic phrases. To say the ship was 'hull down' is better than to say she 'was so far away that only her masts could be seen above the sea,' and 'ship before the mast' is more expressive than 'sign on as a seaman.' The phrase 'sailing before the mast' tells us all we need know, for the seaman lives forward in the fo'c'sle, which is in the bows of the ship—*i.e.*, before the masts. As the officers live aft, abaft the masts, to

'sail before the mast' indicates at once the rank of your sailor.

When you employ the phrase 'half-seas-over' to denote a person half drunk you are using pure classical English, for Swift himself used the words. To 'splice the main-brace' is to take a glass of grog or rum. To 'blow the gaff' is to let out a secret or to inform against another. A 'sea lawyer' is an idle, talkative fellow more given to disputing orders than obeying them. 'Soldiering' is idling, malingering. 'Longshoremen' are old sailors settled ashore. A 'sky pilot' is a clergyman. The aptness of the term is obvious. An 'old shellback' is an old sailor, "with every hair on his head a rope yarn and every finger a hook." A 'crimp' is a tout who secures employment for seamen by shady methods, and a 'mud pilot' is a river pilot. The 'old man' is the captain, 'Slush,' or the 'Doctor,' the cook, 'Chips' the carpenter, 'Sails' is the sailmaker. The Doctor cooks in the galley, or 'caboose,' and gets his 'hard tack' out of the 'cuddy' and his beef or pork, called 'salt junk,' out of the 'harness cask.' The stuff he served to the ever-hungry crew was christened with quaint and expressive names. There was 'dandy-funk,' a dish of powdered biscuit and molasses, and 'lobscouse,' a stew made of broken biscuit, potatoes, and salt meat. For drinking they had black coffee sweetened with molasses, and a liquid called 'water bewitched,' an unrecognizable form of tea. On some of the old windjammers the food was so bad that they say some of the fo'c'sle crowd would eat their food only at night, so that they could not see the weevils in it.

The 'slop-chest' contained the clothing and gear which the captain sold to the men when they needed to supplement their wardrobe. The prices usually meant a good profit to the captain.

The anchor is the 'mud hook,' and most aptly named.

The sextant on American ships was cynically named the ' hog-yoke ' and on British vessels the ' hambone.'

A ' mainsail haul ' is used either as an order in tacking ship or in reference to looting or gaining booty. A ' tarpaulin muster ' is a collection of clothes for a destitute seaman.

Abel Brown, ' Mathew Walker,' and ' Johnny Noble ' are not living men. The first is the title of an unprintable sea ballad, the second is a useful knot, and the third is the slang for the galley chimney on Yankee ships. ' Jimmy Green ' was the name for the old sprit-sail.

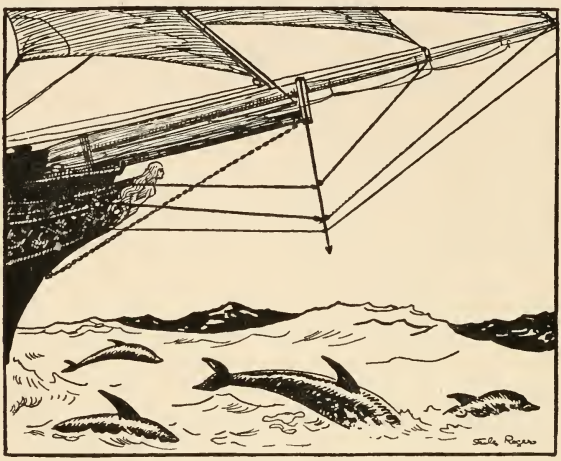
A ship was referred to as a ' windjammer,' ' old barky,' or the ' old hooker.' ' Limejuicer ' was the name given by American sailors to British square-riggers. The term probably refers to the custom of giving out lime-juice to the crew as a preventive of scurvy. A ' down-easter ' referred to American ships from North Atlantic ports. These ships were often spoken of as ' Yankee hell ships,' for they were sailed under the iron discipline of ' bucko mates.' A ' blackbirder ' was a slave ship and carried ' black ivory,' and a ' spouter ' was a whaler. A ' blue-nose ship ' was a ship from Nova Scotia.

One perceives among these sea words the sailor's *penchant* for irony, for what could be more full of ironical humour than the description of any loose, hanging ends of frayed rope as ' Irish pennants,' or the name ' Portuguese man-of-war ' for a small jellyfish-like creature which swims on the surface of the sea ? No man could be more hated on a Yankee hell ship than the mate, and when the foremast hand dubbed the officer's sextant the hog-yoke he put into that phrase all the sourness that was in him.

But if Jack Tar has a sense of irony he also has a touch of poetry in him. In London near the Surrey Docks is a public-house named the Moonrakers, and whoever named that inn was a sailor with a poetic fancy, for ' moonrakers '

is the lovely name for those small sails at the very top of tall-sparred ships. They are only set in light airs, and belong to the class of small extra sails known collectively as ' flying kites.'

The ' dolphin-striker ' is the small spar set below the bowsprit. As it points downward, and dolphins are wont



THE DOLPHIN-STRIKER

to gambol close to the bows of a sailing-ship, the name's application is obvious. The ' Blue Peter ' is a blue flag with a white square in the centre. It is hoisted to the fore-truck when a ship is about to leave port. Speaking of flags, the Red Ensign of the British mercantile marine is affectionately called by modern seamen the ' Red Duster.'

' Deep-sea lashings ' are small lengths of rope yarn which sailors tie around the cuffs and ankles of their oilskins in bad weather to keep water out. A ' soul-and-body lashing ' goes round the waist and serves a similar purpose.

The ' Cape of Storms ' is the Cape of Good Hope, and the less poetical ' Cape Stiff ' is Cape Horn. The big seas off the Horn are called ' Cape Horn greybeards.'

The albatross which sails on the wind is a ' goney,' the seagulls are ' gullies,' the molly-hawks are ' Mollies,' but the stormy petrel is a ' Mother Carey's chicken.'

DAVY JONES'S LOCKER

In old sea literature one comes upon the ancestors of our present sea names. As a matter of interest, here are a few which are sufficiently phonetic in spelling to need no translation: ' sayles,' ' steyes,' ' anker,' ' peyntour,' ' ronnying glass,' ' bitakle,' ' merlying irons,' ' top garlands,' ' hauceres,' ' starreboord,' ' mayne-sayle,' ' yeards,' and ' capsterne.'

Many of our nautical words come from other countries—especially from Holland, which had in Van Tromp's day a formidable navy. Our word ' skipper ' comes from the

Dutch *schipper*, 'captain.' Our words 'yacht' (*jacht*) and 'taffrail' (*tafereel*) also are Dutch in origin. I believe, too, that the modern word 'hooker' for a square-rigged ship comes from the Dutch *hoeker* and our 'sloop' from their *sloep*. Our 'frigate' is derived from the French *frégate*.

When an old shellback dies he 'slips his moorings.' It is an even more common phrase than the familiar 'went to Davy Jones's locker.' When a sailor goes ashore for good he is said to have 'swallowed the anchor.'

Though we may feel that this nautical phraseology is a foreign language to our unaccustomed ears, it is quite amazing how much of this same sea jargon has become part of our everyday speech. Landsmen are constantly using expressions that originally came from sailors, and we have not to seek far to be convinced of the truth of this.

Take, for instance, our modern word 'overwhelm.' *Whelmen* is Middle English, and meant 'to turn a hollow vessel upside down,' 'to turn over.' Here is a word of very definite significance to sailors that has passed over into general speech. Again, the origin of some phrases is obvious and self-explanatory, such as 'to get spliced,' 'sailing close to the wind,' 'above board,' 'sailing under false colours,' 'to take the wind out of his sails,' 'plain sailing,' 'where are you bound for?' 'looking out for squalls,' the 'sheet anchor,' 'all rigged out in his best,' 'the coast is clear,' 'the way the land lies,' and so on. Then there are phrases we use the origin of which, while equally as nautical as the foregoing, needs a little defining. The 'bitter end' originally referred to the end of the cable abaft the bitts, which was not allowed to run out when letting go the anchor. A ship on her beam-ends is ready to founder, hence 'on his beam-ends.' 'Hard up' is a position the helm is put in, while 'on the wrong tack' is to sail in the wrong direction. 'Taken aback' is when the wind surprises the ship by striking the sails on the

wrong side. The main-stay is the ship's strongest stay, thus the 'mainstay of the family.' When a ship is not making any progress in the right direction she is 'making no headway.' To 'brace up' and 'beat about,' 'fall foul of him,' 'in good trim' (when cargo is well stowed), are true nautical phrases.

In Nelson's day sailors, when their ships were in port, were allowed to have female company on board. When the

ON HER BEAM-ENDS

time came for Jack to turn out of his hammock the boatswain or his mate came below to rouse up the laggards. As he walked along the deck he called upon anyone still in the hammocks to 'show a leg,' and, as sailors never wore stockings, if the leg had a stocking on the owner of it was left alone. Hence our injunction to hurry up, 'show a leg.'

All of which goes to show that the most timid stay-at-homes, the gentlest of maiden aunts, and the veriest land-lubbers must constantly turn to the fo'c'sle and quarterdeck for words to express their meaning adequately, and in spite of themselves have for the nonce become sailors.

CHAPTER VI

Sea Ways and Superstitions

THE sea breeds a race of men more conservative than those on land, for many sea customs and superstitions had their beginning in antiquity. The superstition concerning the Russian Finn,[1] the black cat, and sailing on Friday are too ancient for their origin to be traced. So, too, are the ceremony of crossing the line and the custom of breaking a bottle of wine over a ship on launching. But perhaps the most venerable custom of all is that of singing chanties as an accompaniment to labour.

Sea-chanties, like music to marching soldiers, give a zest and a swing to men hauling on a halliard or tramping round the capstan, and no better means of getting men to put their heart into it could be devised.

Who would not put his weight on a capstan bar to this lusty version of *Blow the Man Down*?

Strolling the Highway one night on the spree,
Hey-ho, blow the man down,
I met a flash packet, the wind blowing free,
Give us some time to blow the man down.

Of the port that she hailed from I cannot say much,
Hey-ho, blow the man down,
But by her appearance I took her for Dutch,
Give us some time to blow the man down.

[1] Russian Finns are Jonahs: they are said to bring bad luck to a ship.

Her flag was three colours, her masthead was low,
Hey-ho, blow the man down,
She was round in the counter and bluff in the bow,
Give us some time to blow the man down.

I fired my bow chaser; the signal she knew,
Hey-ho, blow the man down,
She backed her main topsail and for me hove to,
Give us some time to blow the man down.

Or *The Black Ball Line*:

'Twas on a Black Baller I first served my time,
To my yeo, ho! blow the man down!
And on that Black Baller I wasted my prime,
Oh, give us some time to blow the man down.

'Tis when a Black Baller's preparing for sea,
To my yeo, ho! blow the man down!
You'd split your sides laughing at the sights you would see,
Oh, give us some time to blow the man down.

"BLOW THE MAN DOWN"

With tinkers and tailors and soldiers and all,
To my yeo, ho! blow the man down!
That ship for prime seamen on board a Black Ball,
Oh, give us some time to blow the man down.

Reuben Ranzo, *Blow*, *Bullies*, *Blow*, *The Rio Grande*, and *Paddy Doyle*—they all have a strong appeal to the childlike heart of the true deep-water sailor. There are three kinds of sea-chanties, each adapted for a particular labour. There is the capstan chanty, the chanty sung when hauling on the halliards, and the chanty for the sails, or, to be more precise, for the tacks and sheets which set the sails. The

rhythm of each is exactly suited to the work it is chanted to, to the tramp of feet or to the "Heave-ho!" on a line.

Blow the Man Down (no matter which version: there are several) is a halliard chanty, as is also *Reuben Ranzo*. *The Rio Grande* is a capstan chanty:

Where are you going to, my pretty maid?
Oh, away to Rio;
Where are you going to, my pretty maid?
Oh, away Rio,
Oh, away Rio,
Oh, fare you well, my bonny young girl,
We are bound to the Rio Grande.

So, too, is *The Banks of the Sacramento*:

In the Black Ball Line I served my time,
To me hoodah! To me hoodah!
In the Black Ball Line I served my time,
So hurrah for the Black Ball Line!
Blow, my bullies, blow.
For California O.
There's plenty of gold,
So I've been told,
On the banks of the Sacramento.

From Limehouse Docks to Sydney Heads,
To me hoodah! To me hoodah!
From Limehouse Docks to Sydney Heads,
So hurrah for the Black Ball Line!

We were never more than seventy days,
To me hoodah! To me hoodah!
We were never more than seventy days,
So hurrah for the Black Ball Line!

We cracked it on, on a big skiute,
To me hoodah! To me hoodah!
We cracked it on, on a big skiute,
So hurrah for the Black Ball Line!

Haul away O is an example of the chanty for sheet, tack, and bowline:

Louis was the King of France afore the Revolution,
Away, haul away, boys, haul away O!
Louis was the King of France afore the Revolution,
Away, haul away, boys, haul away O!

But Louis got his head cut off, which spoiled his constitution.
Away, haul away, boys, haul away O!
But Louis got his head cut off, which spoiled his constitution.
Away, haul away, boys, haul away O!

And this is a special chanty for the ceremony of consigning the dead horse to the deep, a rite not, perhaps, so ancient in origin as most sea customs.

They say my horse is dead and gone,
And they say so, and they hope so.
They say my horse is dead and gone,
Oh, poor old man!

I'll hoist him to the main yardarm,
And they say so, and they hope so.
I'll hoist him to the main yardarm,
Oh, poor old man!

When sailors signed on on merchant ships they received a month's wages in advance, and, that having been spent before the ship sailed, their first month at sea was without pay. This they called 'working off the dead horse.' When the first month of a long voyage was over Jack felt he must celebrate, a custom that in time became a fixed one. So, for a few hours, discipline was relaxed while these children of the fo'c'sle made an effigy of a horse out of canvas and straw, which, after being dragged about the deck, was set on fire, run up to the main yardarm, and allowed to drop into the sea. At the last word of the chanty the effigy was let go and the crew ordered aft by

the mate to 'splice the mainbrace' with a glass of grog all round. The ceremony must, for some ancient reason, take place in the second dog-watch (6 to 8 P.M.), when, if it is winter-time, the burning horse lights up the deck and no doubt adds to the fun of the game. On these occasions the sailor behaves like a boy, which is hardly to be wondered at, since he has never really grown up. He had, at least in the old days, the soul of a child, and his idea of humour was a boy's idea. Subtleties of wit did not appeal to him, but practical jokes and rough horse-play made him roar with laughter.

The most important and elaborate of all the sea ceremonies that still survive is, of course, the ceremony that accompanies crossing the Line. Until a man had crossed the Line and had been baptized by Neptune he was not a full-blown deep-water sailor. The rite is an ancient one which, with certain modifications, is still practised on those hapless 'green-hands' who have not successfully proved that they have already been initiated into its mysteries. It is said that the old boarding-house 'runners' who supplied crews for ships would turn the veriest landlubber into a sailor by the expedients of chalking a line on the floor and getting the simple fellow to walk over it, and placing a cow's horn also on the floor and instructing the guileless candidate to walk round it. Now, behold, you had a full-fledged deep-water sailor, for the honest agent could truly say to the captain that the man had crossed the Line and been round the Horn!

But to go back to the ceremony in which Neptune comes aboard. The crew are mustered in the waist and the captain is on the poop when a cry comes from somewhere forward:

"Ship ahoy! Ship ahoy!"

"Who hails us?" demands the skipper in a foghorn bellow.

"'Tis Father Neptune," says one of the men.

"Bring him on board, then," orders the skipper.

Now there is seen coming aft a strange company led by Old Neptune himself. He wears a beard and wig made of yellow rope-yarn, and one tattooed hand grasps the shaft of a boat-hook, which serves him for a trident. Over his body is draped part of an old sail held at the waist by a leather belt, into which is thrust Neptune's razor, a huge comic-opera weapon made of hoop-iron and wood. In his wake come, first, Amphitrite, his wife, a masculine-looking female, and then his henchmen, carrying a large tub, which will be filled with water. Before the gathered men Neptune halts and delivers himself somewhat like this: "You have greenhands on board this ship who have never been shaved and baptized by Neptune; so let them stand forth." Then each victim in turn is seated on an upturned bucket while the ancient buffoonery is gone through. First he is asked his name, and while his lips open to frame the words a dirty swab covered with soapsuds and grease is slapped into his mouth and liberally applied to his face. Then comes the shaving with the comic-opera razor, after which the tyro is tipped backward into the tub of sea-water, from

which he emerges a tyro no longer. He has crossed the Line, and may now call himself a deep-water sailor. It is a crude and rough sort of horse-play, but nothing like so rough as it was in Captain Marryat's day. Then it was a much more elaborate affair and, let me add, touched with a spice of cruelty. Neptune came aft as in the modern ceremony, but his retinue was larger and the ordeal the tyro went through was more barbaric—so much so that many officers who had not crossed the Line before would buy immunity from the worst part of the business by giving a bottle of rum to Neptune and his satellites. Neptune himself would be drawn aft on a gun-carriage, his person bedecked with seaweed, oakum, and paint, while behind came his Secretary of State, his surgeon, his barber, and Amphitrite herself. After a dolphin had been presented to the captain and Neptune had received a bumper of Madeira in return the fun began. To ensure that the greenhands did not escape, twelve constables in Neptune's retinue rounded up the crew. At these times old scores were settled, and an unpopular member of the crew had a bad time of it.

Contrary to what one might think, shipboard is a great place for etiquette and ceremony. The poop is sacred ground, and no seaman may go there without orders. His place is in the waist and 'forrard.' He lives in the fo'c'sle, and the officers live aft—hence the expression 'afterguard.' In the fo'c'sle a certain ironbound code of etiquette persists: no man must lock his sea-chest; to do so is equivalent to an insult.

Strictly according to custom, the mate's place is 'forrard,' the captain's and his junior officers' is aft. The mate takes command of all operations in the fore part of the ship—the anchor, the head-sails, the towing hawser, and so on. The captain always addresses him with the title of 'Mr.' If any officer has worked his way up from

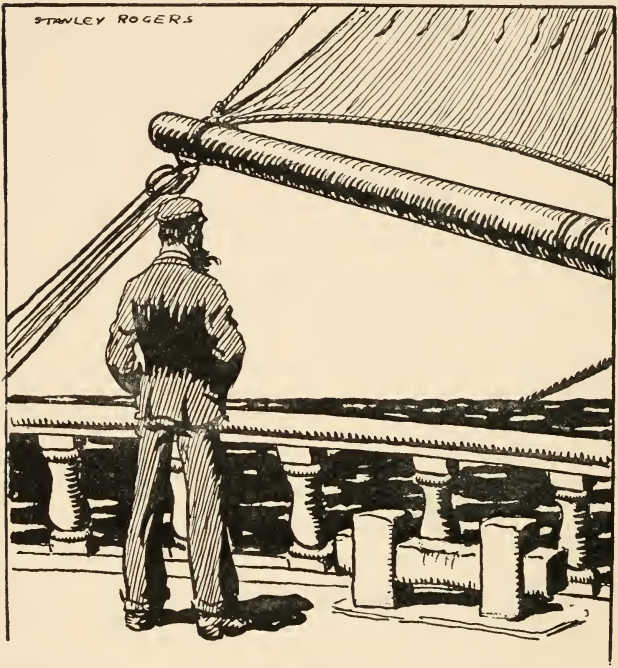
a common seaman's berth he is said to have come aboard 'through the hawse-hole,' the hawse-hole being in the bows; whereas if he learned navigation as an apprentice he came aboard 'through the cabin window.' The captain keeps no regular watch, but the second mate is his deputy and takes captain's watch. The starboard watch is the captain's, the port watch is the mate's; and the crew are divided into what are called the starboard and port watches.

It is interesting to remember that in Elizabethan times the captain on a man-of-war was not the most important man on board. He had over him a landsman, a soldier called the commander. The captain was the 'shipmaster,' and commanded the sailors, but not the ship. He had under him seaman officers known as lieutenants and corporals. On the Spanish men-of-war during the Armada period the actual navigating officers on board were little better than underlings, and so much the victims of the whims and orders of their military superiors, who were fighting men and not sailors, that one does not wonder that so many galleons piled up on the rocks during the summer of 1588.

It is the custom on board sailing-ships for the carpenter, the sailmaker, the cook, and the steward to sleep all night without having to stand a watch. This is because they are busy all day. Since they don't have to work the ship or stand their trick at the wheel, they are known as the 'idlers'; but on occasion they must come up and lend a hand to take in sail in a sudden squall or similar emergency. The bosun also does not stand a regular watch, for he, being a sort of nursemaid to the ship, must be on duty both night and day if need be—thus he sleeps when he can. He is responsible for the gear both alow and aloft.

When a ship is on her beam-ends, or in danger of broaching to, even the lord of the ship himself will descend from his high place and tail on to a brace or a halliard.

But in normal circumstances the captain is as aloof on the ship as an emperor among his subjects. His is a lonely existence. He rarely descends to converse with anyone but the mate, and even then is often sour or laconic to his



first officer. If he wants a thing done he usually gives his orders to the mate, who can, without losing face, repeat the order directly to the man or men for whom the command is meant. This life of grand and gloomy isolation frequently, in the clipper-ship days, made ships' captains silent men with many eccentricities. Such an existence

developed ' queer characters,' and not a few writers of sea fiction have taken advantage of it. Conrad has drawn the sea-captain with the morose and silent character, and Herman Melville, in *Moby Dick*, gives rein to the full to this possibility in the morbid picture of the mad Captain Ahab.

In the hands of an Edgar Allan Poe there is plenty of material for a mystery tale centred round a half-mad captain. A discontented crew, continuous head-winds, a tyrannical mate, a demented skipper, and a mysterious woman, or perhaps a Russian Finn on board, gives the writer all that is necessary to build up a tale that would keep one awake at night.

ALBATROSS

Speaking of Russian Finns, it is a superstition among sailors even to this day that a Finlander is a wizard and is in touch with the supernatural. If the winds be fair, then a Finn among the crew passes without much comment; but should there come a death on board, or should the ship lose a spar or two in a gale, murmurings may swell to active discontent and talk of a bewitched ship. A Russian Finn is given his correct racial title, but as a rule the fo'c'sle crowd have their own very definite names for the different European races among sailors. Spaniards, Portuguese, and Italians are ' Dagos,' Germans are ' Dutchmen,' and Scandinavians are ' Scowegians.'

A humane superstition is that which forbids interference with sea-birds on the ground that they are the spirits of dead sailors; though the albatross, especially in these days of steam, is not always safe from the bait

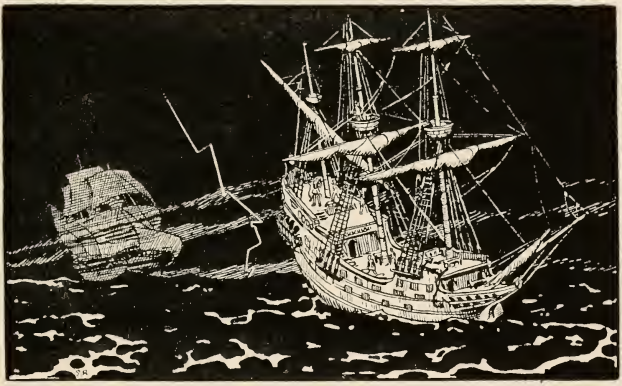
of sailors who do not share Coleridge's respect for that historic bird:

> And I had done a hellish thing,
> And it would work 'em woe:
> For all averred, I had killed the bird
> That made the breeze to blow.
> Ah, wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
> That made the breeze to blow!

A superstition which has not many supporters these days is the legend of Vanderdecken, the Flying Dutchman. Whether any living sailors profess to have seen his phantom ship beating off the Cape I know not; but it is on record that he *was* seen by witnesses on a hundred different ships. Briefly, the legend is that Vanderdecken—for a mortal sin, that of defying God—was visited by a curse—for ever to sail in the region of the Cape of Good Hope with only one man as crew, and he a monster.

Vanderdecken, a Dutch captain of, roughly, the period of Van Tromp, was sailing in the Indian Ocean when he reached the latitude of the Cape. Here he ran into bad weather (not an uncommon experience to this day), and after being buffeted about for weeks his crew pleaded with him to give up the attempt to round the Cape until such time as the weather moderated. But the captain was one of those men who are given to boast that they fear neither God nor the devil, and it came to pass that during a heavy gale the clouds opened and God Himself appeared before the blasphemous Dutchman. The pious crew and passengers fell upon their knees before the Vision, but upon the poop Vanderdecken defiantly remained standing. Indeed, his defiance was so great that he is said to have fired a ball from his heavy pistol at the Supreme Being. At this the Vision was heard by all to pronounce the curse which, as far as hearsay tells us, Vanderdecken carries to this day, " For thy wickedness and thy blasphemy thou

shalt sail these seas for ever without rest." After uttering this curse the Vision disappeared, and Vanderdecken found himself alone—save for a misshapen monster at his side—in his ship on a storm-tossed sea. Like the Wandering Jew he was condemned to a roving life for ever. Seamen say, or used to say in the old days, that Vanderdecken's phantom ship will pursue other ships, and, on overtaking them, Vanderdecken is seen on his quarterdeck holding



out a letter the while he screams out that he would like it posted. But it was said among seamen that whosoever took Vanderdecken's letter to post would be pursued through the rest of his life by bad luck. Hence the phantom ship was given a wide berth whenever it was sighted.

There is more than one version of the legend of the phantom ship, which appears in waters all over the world, even so near home as in the North Sea. Here it is one Falkenberg, a German nobleman, who for a murder is condemned to sail the North Sea for ever. Like Vanderdecken he sails without a crew, but his ship differs from

the Dutchman's in the one respect that at night tongues of flame shoot skyward from its mastheads.

A charming and romantic superstition of the sea is that concerning the electrical phenomenon which appears as faintly glowing balls of light on the trucks and yardarms of ships during an electrical storm. These balls of light are known among sailors variously as 'Jack-a-lantern,' 'St Elmo's fire,' or 'corposant,' and, among the whalemen, 'ampizant.' Corposant is merely a corruption of *corposanto*. It is an ideal natural phenomenon to stir the imagination of seamen, who have always attributed to it a supernatural meaning. The common theory is that it is the warning of coming storm, and is sent by St Elmo to all mariners out of gratitude for once having been saved from drowning by a Breton captain, who hove his vessel to and picked up the saint, who was seen in the heaving seas. This legend hails from Brittany. These lights do appear sometimes during a storm, but there is nothing particularly mysterious about them, for they are simply a form of electric energy become visible in rarefied air and appearing on prominent pieces of ironwork or at the yardarms of a ship. Old writers and old ships' logs frequently mention this St Elmo's fire. The legendary explanation is a pretty one, and if we are wise we are content to leave it at that. The old story-tellers at least usually had something on which to build. They had St Elmo's warning before their eyes.

The great Kraken, the sea-serpent, and the Lost Atlantis are at least half-truths. The Kraken was nothing more than a Gargantuan squid or octopus, and who can say that such monsters do not exist in the depths of the sea? Frank Bullen once saw a large sperm whale in deadly conflict with an octopus almost as big as itself. On such evidence one begins to think that the old painting in the church at St Malo, in which a giant squid is entwining its tentacles

around the rigging of a ship, may not be such fantastic exaggeration after all.

In October 1873, in the waters of Conception Bay, Newfoundland, an octopus attacked two fishermen, but sank into the sea after two of its tentacles had been chopped off as they lay over the edge of the boat. From the length of these arms the diameter of this octopus was estimated to be nearly eighty feet! Some time later one was actually caught which measured over fifty feet in diameter.

As for the sea-serpent, why should it not exist? From time to time mariners will return to port with a story of a sea-serpent, and so strong is their belief in the infallibility of their eyes that they will sign sworn affidavits vouching for the truth of their story. It would be easy to quote a score of instances of sea-serpents having been seen. From these accounts they seem to have appeared most frequently off the coasts of New England and Norway. Whether the Norwegian accounts are due to the fact that the superstitions of their Viking forbears are still in their blood—for the Vikings firmly believed in sea-serpents—one cannot say; but it is an intriguing coincidence that the modern descendants of those wild people, who almost deified snakes and dragons, should number among them people who claim to have seen sea-serpents in these matter-of-fact days.

If the mythical stories of the Lost Continent of Atlantis are not a subject for learned discussion in the fo'c'sle it was, in the days when sailors thought they could sail over the edge of the world and believed in the land of Prester John, a very important reality to them. In many ancient maps Atlantis is actually charted, and every sea-venturer in the days of Columbus kept a look-out for the Lost Continent. According to ancient mythology, Atlantis was a Utopian country; hence it was associated with the Fortunate Isles, the Islands of the Blest, a sort of Garden of the Hesperides. No wonder sailors were willing to believe in

its existence. What a paradise it would be after the evils of the fo'c'sle. The tattooed and horny-handed mariner imagined for himself a land where there was no labour, no storms, but an abundance of food and drink and fair women for everybody. Such is a man's heaven!

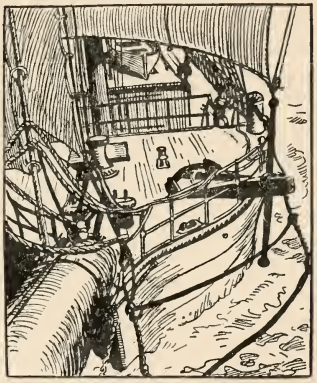
The Atlantis legend is first mentioned by Plato in two of his dialogues, where he refers with considerable detail to a continent in the West called Atlantis. He told how it lay beyond the Pillars of Hercules—which is the Rock of Gibraltar and its opposite mount on the African shore. But Plato, after describing the continent and its history, tells how, when its people had reached a very exalted state of civilization, a great cataclysm overwhelmed the country and it was swallowed up by the sea.

A chapter of sea-life that is now fortunately closed was the harsh discipline, especially as it was enforced on board the old men-of-war. And it must be understood that in the days of oak and hemp there was not the difference between men-of-war and merchantmen that there is to-day. Merchant ships went armed, for pirates infested the seas, and discipline was very strict on board all vessels, especially in the Navy. Punishments were barbaric, and in Nelson's time were degrading and cruel even for small offences. No wonder mutinies were fairly common when honest men were flogged for trifling infringements of rules which would nowadays pass unnoticed.

Richard Henry Dana wrote [1] a vivid description of a flogging that was administered when he was in the brig *Pilgrim*, and such incidents were frequent occurrences on some ships. The Yankee hell ships of the early clipper days were almost as bad as the old men-of-war for scenes of brutality. 'Handspike hash' and 'belaying-pin soup,' as we have said, were not merely jests.

[1] In *Two Years before the Mast*.

On board the brig *Pilgrim* there was a big seaman called Sam—"only a tolerably good sailor, but usually seemed to do his best." Captain Thompson one morning happened to be in an evil temper, and turned his anger against the inoffensive Sam. He found fault with the man and quickly worked himself into a violent passion. He struck him several times, and when the man, not daring to strike back, remonstrated, saying, "I'm no negro slave," the captain shouted, "Then I'll make you one." He at once threw off his coat and ordered the mate to seize the man up in the rigging, exclaiming, "I'll teach you all who is master aboard." Meanwhile the crew had gathered around, and one, a Swede and more daring than the rest, spoke up. "What are you going to flog that man for, sir?" he asked.



This was too much for the mad skipper, and he ordered another officer to put the Swede in irons, the mate being occupied in holding Sam, the first offender. But John, the Swede, said, "Let me alone: I am willing to be put in irons," and held out his hands for the captain to slip the irons on him. Now the wretched Sam was seized up to the rigging by his wrists and his back bared. The captain, standing with his feet apart at a convenient distance from his victim, swung a rope with the full force of his powerful arm against Sam's naked back. After six vicious cuts the captain said, "Will you ever give me any more of your jaw?" and though Sam twisted in agony, he was silent. A few more cuts with the bloodstained rope and he muttered

something which seemed to satisfy the captain, for he ordered him to be cut down—but not until he was on the point of fainting.

The captain now turned his attention to John, whose crime consisted in asking a civil question. But when John's irons were taken off so that he could be triced up he ran forward. Perhaps his nerves had failed him. However, the captain ordered one of his officers to bring him back, but when the zealous third mate sprang forward and seized John the latter threw the fellow from him. When, however, the first mate approached and quietly asked him to come aft John made no more resistance, but held out his hands and was soon tied to the shrouds. As they were making him fast he felt the indignity of it and began to struggle; but the two officers held him while the captain seized his wrists. As he hung there, his back ready for the blows, he turned his head and asked the captain, "Have I ever refused my duty, sir?" "No," said the captain; "it is not that that I flog you for; I flog you for your interference, for asking questions."

John still protested, but it only increased the captain's passion, and, fairly dancing with anger, he laid on the rope with all his strength, at the same time shouting, "If you want to know what I flog you for, I'll tell you. It's because I like to do it! because I like to do it! It suits me! That's what I do it for!"

The scene which followed was hideous. Poor John writhed with the pain and called upon Christ, at which the captain shouted, "*He can't help you. Call on Frank Thompson!* He's the man! He can help you! Jesus Christ can't help you now!"

After John was released and sent forward, crippled with pain, the captain harangued the crew with loud-mouthed boasting and ferocious threats calculated to inspire fear in the heart of every man on board. Afterward John asked

the steward to get the captain to let him have some salve to put on his blistered and swollen back, but the captain's reply was typical of the man. "No," he said; "tell him to put his shirt on—that's the best thing for him—and pull me ashore in the boat." And that row ashore and back was six miles!

Why did the men stand it? Simply because the law was on the side of the captain. His word would have been taken against that of the men, and flogging was a recognized punishment. And the knowledge that the captain usually went armed had a deterring effect on attempts at mutiny.

Flogging in Nelson's time was an even more ugly business than that of which we have just given an account. For some infringements of discipline a man could be sentenced to be flogged round the fleet—an ordeal which frequently ended in the death of the prisoner.

To be flogged round the fleet meant that the victim should receive an equal part of the number of the lashes alongside every ship comprising the fleet. Thus, if he was sentenced to *three hundred* lashes, and the fleet consisted of fifteen ships, it meant that he would receive twenty lashes alongside each ship. For this purpose a boat was fitted with a platform and a sort of tripod, to which the prisoner was seized. He was rowed alongside each ship to receive a part of the lashes, while the ship's company were obliged to look on. If a man survived three hundred lashes he was usually a broken man for the rest of his life.

Another piece of barbarism of the old-time Navy was the system of impressment, a custom which finds its counterpart in the shanghai-ing of sailors for merchant ships almost to the present day. Legally the press-gang—sent out to get by force recruits for the Navy—were not supposed to take any men but sailors. In practice, however, they took any able-bodied men they could lay their hands on, no matter whether they were married and had dependents

or not. An old account of the reception of impressed men on board a man-of-war vividly shows the wretchedness of the impressed men and the callousness of the officers. The impressed men, just caught, are being brought separately before the captain, who sits with his clerk at a table.

The captain coldly looks at the man before him, and says with a malicious jest, "Brown, why look so black? How long have you been going to sea and what is your age?" "I am thirty years old, my lord, and I have been at sea fifteen years." "Will you serve in the King's Navy?" asks the officer. But the man protests he has his own fishing-smack, which is his livelihood. "So you refuse to take the King's bounty, eh?" dryly asks the officer. "Well, my lord, it's like this——" "Then you must serve without the bounty. March him off."

The next man is brought forward. "How long have you been going to sea?" "Ten years, your honour." "Where have you served?" "Haven't served anywhere, sir." "Now then, no back talk, or I'll marry you to the gunner's daughter. Send the bosun aft with the cat!" "Beg your pardon, your honour, I meant I'd never served on board a man-of-war." "Then it is time you should, my man. Go forward."

The third man is brought up. "Cobbler, who are you?" "I'm a baker, my lord." "Don't 'my lord' me. Why did you come on board? Do you yearn for the sea?" "No, sir. That officer and his men nabbed me, sir, just as I was going home to my dear wife." "Nevertheless you are going to bake bread on board one of His Majesty's ships for the next few years."

There ran an old ballad:

> Young Sandy was pressed from his Alice's side
> As they strayed to converse in the dale,
> And Sandy was wooing the maid as his bride,
> When the gang stopped his amorous tale.

The good old days exist more in the romantic imagination than they existed in fact. Life at sea in the fo'c'sle a hundred years ago will not bear too close scrutiny if we are over-squeamish. The punishments on board were barbaric, and the methods of the surgeon with wounded men during battle were horrible. Pirates were still a danger to be reckoned with, and comforts for passengers were almost unknown. When Dickens crossed to America in the forties he had to put up with accommodation that nowadays a steerage passenger might complain of. We are becoming a pampered, coddled race, and few of us would elect to have the old days back again. Nevertheless it remains a fact that that rigorous life of danger and hardship bred a race of men that were in their day invincible.

CHAPTER VII

Whaling

THE old deep-water sailor had little respect for a whaleman, whose ship was dubbed a ' spouter,' an unlovely name which was obviously suggested by its association with the spouting whale. Whaling-vessels were popularly supposed to be dirty and greasy, exuding oil at every seam—a ' blubber wagon,' in fact. Also, there were many who belittled the hazards of whaling, contending that the whale is a stupid animal and that the hurling of a harpoon into its huge bulk required neither skill nor courage. The whaleman, on the other hand, had his own particular brand of contempt for the clipper-ship sailor who made comparatively short passages, while the whaleman was apt to remain at sea for three or four years at a stretch.

At handling sails whalemen may not have been as smart as the crack clipper's men, but when it came to handling an open boat at sea they had no equals in the whole world. The whalemen's chanty, *A dead whale or a stove boat*, was no mere lyrical boast. It was a point of honour—or shall we say pride?—not to give up the pursuit of a harpooned whale so long as a boat was undamaged or there was enough daylight left to see the quarry. Even a stove boat was not considered excuse sufficient for abandoning the chase. If not damaged beyond repair the craft was kept temporarily afloat by lashing oars across the gunwales to form a temporary raft for the men, while their mates in the other boats continued the chase.

But first let us consider the whale, for without whales

there would be no whalers. Whales are not fish: their blood is warm; they cannot breathe under water; and also, being mammals, they suckle their young—a state of affairs that makes one wonder why whales live in the sea at all. The family of Cetacea is a large one of about eighty species, with the patriarch cachalot, or sperm whale, at its head. Not only is the cachalot one of the largest whales, but, being a fighter, he is king by right of might. Also, he is the most valuable of his tribe. In size he is equal to, and sometimes exceeds, the Arctic right whale; and the amount of oil he yields is vastly greater than that from any other of the whale family. He will reach seventy feet in length, and may produce as much as a hundred barrels of oil. On the other hand, he does not possess that valuable fringe called whalebone, which is the main wealth of the right whales. In appearance the cachalot is not distinguished for personal beauty, for the enormous square head robs him of that fine streamline form that is characteristic of others of his tribe. He is, in a word, bluff in the bows, and throws up a bow wave like that of an ancient three-decker when he is travelling on the surface.

A full-length portrait of him shows an enormous, square-ended, box-like head, which takes up one-third of his entire length. His eyes are grotesquely small, but his ears are even more disproportionate in size. They are tiny holes just at the back of the eye, and about the diameter of a small finger-ring. His jaw, armed with a row of twenty or more conical teeth, is a long, narrow weapon not unlike the mandible of some birds. The spout-hole is a slit situated on the upper and extreme forward end of the head. There is a short, broad flipper on each side behind the jaw, and the dorsal fin is a mere rudiment. The tail, with those enormous flukes that can smash a whale-boat, is placed horizontally to the body, which is characteristic of the cetaceans. The colour of the sperm whale is black

above and grey below, and his outer skin is a mere pellicle, like black varnish, called by whalers ' black skin.' The layer of blubber lies directly underneath. The head contains a great hollow reservoir full of spermaceti, which is baled out to the volume of twenty barrels or even more. The spermaceti is a smooth, oily substance, a clear liquid when warm in the living whale, but solidifying into a sort of white wax when cold.

When a sperm whale ' sounds '—that is, dives—he first lifts the head above water, at the same time spouting; then the snout is dipped, the back rounds in an arch, while the giant flukes are lifted from the sea perhaps twenty feet, when quietly, and without any spray or fuss, the whale goes down in a perpendicular descent, leaving the surface barely rippled. He may remain below in the green depths as long as fifteen minutes, when he is forced to come up for air. He will rise, perhaps, half a mile away, remaining on the surface for two or three minutes before sounding again. We see, when he comes up, a plume of dense white mist. This is not water, as is often supposed, but merely water-vapour blown out of the respiratory canal. The cachalots frequently swim in schools of about a dozen, called ' pods,' and the mother whales will lie on their backs just under the surface when suckling their young. The baby whale rests on the mother's vast body while it imbibes several gallons of the thick white milk.

The cachalot was first and last the main incentive to the hazardous business of whaling. Not only is its blubber melted into sperm oil and its vast head a reservoir of liquid wax, but from its intestines comes the priceless ambergris which is used in the manufacture of so many perfumes. Lastly, there are its great teeth, large enough to make its ivory worth securing. Its oil, before the days of gas, was used both for lamps and for making candles, and is still

used as a lubricant. It was, in fact, the advent of gas-lighting that killed the old-fashioned whaling industry, when the pursuit of the whale was made from small boats and the kill was made by hand-thrown harpoons.

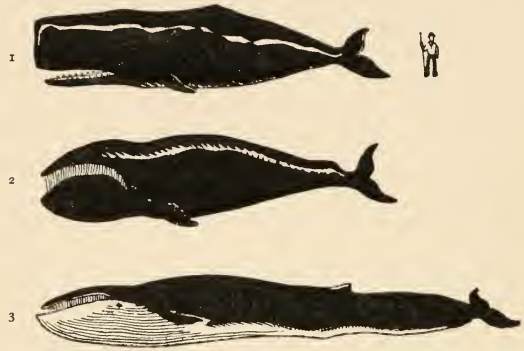
Yet there were those who said that whale-hunting was not dangerous. Imagine a cockleshell boat containing eight men, tossed about on a heaving sea, while it was manœuvred up to a great beast whose tail alone could, with one sweep, cut the boat in two. Imagine the harpooner with his puny dart poised to hurl into this living black mass the size of a house. Imagine the dart hurtling into the side of the leviathan, the shock, and the cry of "Starn all!" as the enormous flukes strike the sea a crashing blow. Imagine the boat ten miles from the ship, a thousand miles from land, and the chances of the maddened animal turning on its attackers—a thing which frequently happened. Then say whaling was not dangerous! The dangers of old-fashioned whaling are obvious. Men were sometimes killed by a blow from the flukes of a whale, or drawn overboard by getting entangled in the line when a whale sounded. They might be injured by the razor-edged weapons lying in the boat, or, what was the commonest accident of all, drowned when their craft was smashed. Those were the hazards of whaling! But to return to the whale himself.

Herman Melville has in *Moby Dick* a whimsical chapter on cetology in which he divides the whale family into "three primary Books (subdivisible into Chapters). . . . I. The Folio Whale; II. The Octavo Whale; III. The Duodecimo Whale." He presents the sperm among his examples of the folio, the grampus among the octavos, and the porpoise among the duodecimos, which is plainly a very convenient way of arranging them.

While the cachalot was the most sought after by the whalers, the Greenland whale (he of the whalebone), the

southern right whale, the rorqual, the hump-back whale, and other types, were chased readily enough when their tell-tale plume of vapour was sighted from the whaler's mastheads.

Though the sperm whale is said to be the largest of all animals, he is by no means the longest. His cousin the rorqual grows to the length of eighty-five feet, which is an



1. SPERM WHALE, OR CACHALOT. 2. GREENLAND, OR RIGHT, WHALE. 3. RORQUAL, OR FIN-BACK

amazing length, particularly when you associate it with a girth greater than that of the largest elephant. The rorqual might be described as clipper-built, because of his long, streamline shape. Being a fast swimmer, he feeds on living fish. He is poor in both whalebone and blubber, hence he was not usually hunted until steam whalers came into the business.

Among the whalebone species, and at the same time among the larger whales, are the three right whales—the Arctic, the southern, and the bowhead, but they do not possess the 'case' of spermaceti, which is peculiar to the cachalot. Others among the big fellows are the fin-back,

the blue whale, the sei whale, the sulphur-bottom, the hump-back, and the grey whale. In the second category is the terrible killer whale—*Orca gladiator*—which preys on the timid right whales in the polar seas. Killers have been known to burst through the ice in one vicious charge to devour the seals basking above. The bottle-nose whale is big brother to the dolphin, and bears him a distinct family resemblance.

The cachalot has the remarkable power of sinking bodily

and rapidly from a position of entire rest on the surface in a horizontal descent without the slightest apparent movement—a useful accomplishment when surprised by attackers. Another mysterious thing about the cachalot is the 'glip.' This is oil, or its equivalent, which, when the animal is alarmed, will spread out on the surface around it, and, so it was thought, serve in some way to give warning to other whales near by. The notion that a whale's throat is too small to swallow anything larger than tiny fish is only half true. The whalebone whales have such small gullets that they must perforce live on the tiny animal life of the sea, which they gather in bushels by swimming with their vast jaws open and by straining off the sea-water through their fringe of bone. The cachalot, however, feeds differently. If Jonah was swallowed by a whale the

cachalot is the guilty party, for he has a throat that will admit the passage of objects the size of a man, without difficulty. Through this vast portal must go those great morsels of the giant squid that are often found in his stomach. There are well-authenticated accounts (one of which I have fully recounted in a former volume [1]) of men being swallowed by sperm whales, and, to carry proof further, if proof were needed, there has been found in a cachalot's stomach morsels of food considerably larger than a man. The gullet of a sperm whale can accommodate pieces of food up to eight feet in diameter, so we are not surprised to hear of the skeleton of a sixteen-foot shark being found in a dead whale.

That Jonah could have been swallowed by a whale is reasonable enough, but whether he could have lived three days in its stomach is a matter to be decided according to how one interprets Biblical allegory.

Having spoken of the whale, let us now consider the ship.

The Ship

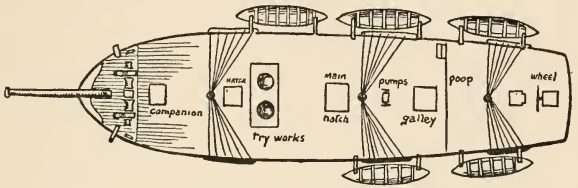
"Built by the mile and cut off in lengths as you want 'em," is the way sailors described the square-sterned, blunt-nosed old wooden whale-ships. Whalers were built for utility, and not for grace of lines. A whaling voyage would last, perhaps, three years, and if your ship is going to be, so to speak, out of doors in all weathers for three years, you must have her solidly built. There is no hurry on a whaling cruise; therefore you can ignore all thoughts of speed. What matter it if your ship is blunt in the bows and square in the stern, if in being so she can stow away a few more barrels of oil?

A whaler differed in many respects from other ships. She had no rake at all to her three masts, her deck was

[1] *Ships and Sailors.*

flush from the taffrail to the knightheads. Her bulwarks were set with heavy wooden cranes, or davits, for lowering the whale-boats, and amidships stood a square erection of brick—the 'try-works' for boiling out the oil. She seemed, to the onlooker, to carry more boats than her size demanded, for there were usually five of them swung on the cranes, and two more stowed, bottom-upward, on the gallows in the waist.

At the head of her main-mast were attached the great cutting-in blocks and falls, for raising blubber from the



A WHALER: "BUILT BY THE MILE"

whale alongside. The try-works referred to above were of brick, cemented and reinforced with iron bands. This ugly erection contained in its lower part a furnace with flues, and in its upper section two large cisterns, or boilers, capable of holding 140 gallons of oil each. Its purpose was to boil the oil out of the blubber stripped from the whales taken. As a precaution against fire the whole erection stood in a shallow iron cistern of water. Below were large iron tanks for stowing oil, though most of it went into wooden barrels made for the purpose. In the list of an American whaler's equipment and stores was the following: "1400 wooden-hooped and 400 iron-hooped casks." In them were stowed the ship's food stores. As these provisions were used up the casks became empty in readiness to be filled with oil. In the list of food supplies were forty barrels of salt meat, three tons of bread, twenty-

five barrels of flour, and fifty gallons of molasses. This latter took the place of sugar in the men's tea. Whaleships had a name for untidiness and dirtiness, though how they got that reputation it is hard to tell. Sailing not being their chief business, a whaler's rigging was often neglected, and hung, as sailors said, with 'Irish pennants.' Their decks, however, were always (except during trying out [1]) extremely clean, and as spick and span as the deck of a man-of-war.

Up aloft on the mastheads of whaleships is a contrivance peculiar to them alone. No other ships have this piece of machinery, for no other ships need it. This is the 'crow's nest'—the look-out platform at the royal mastheads. As soon as a whaler drops the land astern the masthead is manned, and, from daylight to nightfall, a watch is kept for whales from those lofty perches every day as long as the ship is at sea, no matter if the voyage lasts three years. The mechanics of a whaler's crow's nest are simple to the point of Spartan severity. There is no comfortable barrel lashed to the royal pole, no steel cabin fitted with windows and a telephone, as on a modern liner. On a whaler you had secured to the cross-trees on each side of the mast a tiny stage about a foot square, an aerial platform barely large enough to accommodate the two feet of the look-out man. Above this perch at a reasonable distance were

[1] Trying out was the operation of boiling the blubber to obtain the oil.

fastened two rings, like a giant pair of spectacles, each ring large enough to admit of a man's body. The only humanitarian concession to physical comfort was in the slight padding of these rings. The look-out, after pushing his head and shoulders through one of them, would repose his arms on its rim, and thus, like a statue on a column, he would remain immobile on the look-out for whales until his watch was over. If the tell-tale plume of vapour or the black shapes of the whales themselves showed above the sea, from aloft would come the cry, "Ah, blow-o!" or "There she blows!" according to the custom of the ship.

When cruising on a whaling-ground the ship sailed over as much space as the wind allowed during the hours of daylight. When night came the whaler remained as stationary as possible, under reefed sails, and with the mainyard aback. Having little work to do at night, most of the men were allowed to sleep without turning out for watches, as on other vessels. As the toil of the crew during the day was often excessive, this rest at night was an imperative, and not a sentimental, custom.

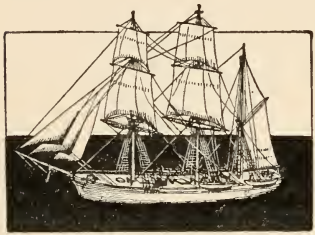
Having introduced the ship, we must now provide it with a crew.

The Crew

There was a slight difference in the number and the duties of the personnel of an American whaler and a British whaler, so in providing the crew for our ship we will try to give an average picture of the men that made it up, without particularizing unless it is necessary.

There were divided among the four active whale-boats twenty-four men, which gives you six men to a boat—a harpooner, a boat-steerer, and four oarsmen. Besides these twenty-four men you had the carpenter, who repaired damaged boats, the cooper, who made oil-casks, the

armourer or blacksmith, who forged the razor-edged irons for the harpooners, the cook, the steward, and, lastly, the captain. Those who stayed on board during the pursuit of the whale were called 'ship-keepers.' Thus the crew averaged thirty men, sometimes more, sometimes less. Some ships carried a surgeon, in others the captain performed that office. The manner of remuneration on a whaler was arranged, by ancient custom, on a profit-sharing basis; but it was so unfair in favours that an ordinary seaman might return from a two- or three-year voyage with but a few pounds, or dollars, to his credit. It was the custom of some captains to 'haze'[1] the crew toward the end of a voyage to encourage them to desert, thereby sacrificing their earnings. Such conduct on the part of the captains was encouraged by the less scrupulous owners of whale-ships. So well known was this that, as the casks below became full of oil and the voyage was nearing its end, the crew would expect the captain to start 'raising hell.' This, I say, was frequent, though not invariable. The remuneration—it can't be considered wages because it was a fluctuating quantity—was called a 'share' or a 'lay.' The captain usually received one-fifteenth to one-tenth lay, while an ordinary seaman was fortunate to receive a one-hundred-and-fiftieth lay. Bullen says that he received on the *Cachalot* a two-hundredth lay, which, of course, is a mean reward for such a toilsome and dangerous occupation as whaling. That meant that for every two hundred barrels of oil taken he was entitled to one barrel, which he must sell to the ship at the prevailing rate, which was then



[1] *I.e.*, bully, terrorize.

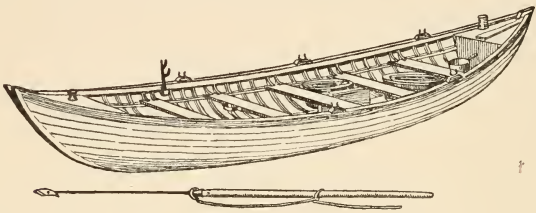
200 dollars per tun, or 20 dollars (£4) per barrel. The arduous work was hard on clothes, and, as the sailor had to replenish his 'gear' from the captain's slop-chest at an extortionate price, he spent most of his earnings on these necessities.

On New Bedford and Nantucket whalers there was an individual holding the rank of chief harpooner, which, in the vernacular, was called the 'specksynder.' In the hierarchy of a whaler, where the captain was the Grand Khan, the Czar, the ruthless despot, and the men his serfs, there was a strange middle class, neither officers nor seamen. They were the harpooners, with the specksynder as their leader. The word 'specksynder' comes from the old Dutch whalers, who went into the Arctic centuries ago. The leading men in 'flensing' the whale were the 'Spek koning'—that is, blubber kings—and their foreman was the specksynder, or head fat-cutter. They were, if you like, the petty officers. In the British whale-ships the chief harpooner reigns under the title of the 'specksioneer,' a corruption of the Dutch word which the Nantucketers used. And, our ship having been found and given a crew, they must now be provided with the tools of their trade, which are the whale-boat and its gear.

The Whale-boat and Gear

The whale-boat was a happy combination of beauty and usefulness. Its design was the fruit of experience. It rode the seas like an albatross, and for lightness, grace, seagoing qualities, and speed it had no peer. This paragon of a boat, shallow in draught, undecked, light to the point of frailness with its half-inch cedar planking, would ride dry where ordinary boats would fill. Every feature of a whale-boat suggested perfect fitness for its work. It must be able to retreat without losing precious time in turning, so

they gave it a sharp stern; it must be buoyant, so they built it of thin white cedar; it must row easily, so they gave it fine lines; it must ride heavy seas, so they gave it upswept ends and a low centre of gravity. In length it was about thirty feet, and it had four or five thwarts, the forward one being pierced with a hole for a mast that carried a lugsail. On the short, decked-over stern was the logger-head, a post shaped like a top-hat, and used for snubbing the line on when fast to a whale. The stem had a groove lined with lead, or fitted with a brass roller, over



which passed the whale-line when running out. The thole-pins were padded to deaden the sound made by the oars when approaching a whale. In the bows was a forked crutch of wood in which rested the harpoons when not in use.

Between the after-thwarts stood the tub, or tubs, containing the carefully coiled line—usually one large tub in British boats, and two smaller ones in American boats. The line, 300 fathoms long, was made of manilla rope two-thirds of an inch thick, very flexible, and of sufficient strength to bear a weight of three tons. The three harpoons carried were rods of soft, malleable iron, three feet long and set in heavy, five-foot shafts of wood. The blade of the harpoon, like an arrow-head with but one barb, moved on a swivel at the end of the iron shaft. Besides the harpoons were those lethal weapons, the lances, which were used to give the whale its *coup de grâce*. The rest of

the gear which burdened the frail boat were the oars (five to seven of them), a short flag-pole, for signalling, the mast and lugsail, an axe for cutting the line, a tail knife, for cutting a hole in the flukes for towing the whale, grapnel, boat-hooks, mallet, swab, baling bucket, and one or two other items of gear put in the boat as a precautionary measure, such as a keg of fresh water, a tin of biscuits, and a lantern. A rudder was carried, but not often used, the steering being done by the boat-steerer's long oar. With a steering oar the boat could be manœuvred much more rapidly than by a rudder. It is easily to be understood that a quick turn of the boat often meant the difference between safety and disaster.

The old spouter is complete; she has her crew, she has her boats and gear. There remains the task of bringing all this machinery into action.

The Chase

A westerly wind is driving the ship through the long waves of the South Pacific, when the cry comes from the masthead, "A bl-o-o-o-w-o!" "Where away?" calls the mate. "Sperm whale, four points off the weather bow, five mile away, sir." Then a cry, "There go flukes," as the whale sounds. The captain goes up the main rigging with his glasses, while the mate gives the order, "Stand by to lower." The yards are laid aback, and two boats are lowered to start their long toil to windward. After three-quarters of an hour's hard pulling the harpooner calls out, "There she whitewaters." The great black body of the whale is now seen as the boat rises over the top of a wave; and the tension grows as four pairs of strong hands pull at the oars driving the frail craft, loaded with death, toward the unsuspecting leviathan. Sometimes the whale is 'gallied' (*i.e.*, frightened) before the harpooner can get

within effective throwing distance; perhaps the animal has heard the slight hiss of the boat's keel cutting through the water, or he may have seen, with one of his pig-like eyes, the boat. If he sounded there was nothing to do but wait for him to rise again.

There was a touch of cruelty in the make up of a harpooner. I suppose such a tigerish strain was necessary if the trade was to be carried on successfully. Like a hound after a fox, the harpooner would follow his prey until he had dispatched it. Often the boats would be ten miles from their ship before their quarry was riding on the swell, a dead whale. Urging the rowers on with encouragements and oaths, the harpooner stood in the bows of the boat, the embodiment of a primitive man. His war-cry was, "A dead whale or a stove boat," and if either of these two events failed to come off it was not his fault. Sometimes they lost their animal—either through the whale getting gallied and never letting them approach near enough to throw the harpoon or because of the whale towing the boat so far from the ship that the line had to be cut to save the boat's crew from being lost. Often the whale would rush off dragging *all* the line (perhaps 7000 feet of it) and a thirty-foot boat. For miles the whale-boat would be towed, crashing over the waves on a 'Nantucket sleigh ride,' as the whalemen called it. If the boat could be hauled in close enough the lance was brought into play to give the whale his death-stroke. The death of a whale was called the 'flurry,' when the dying monster hurled its immense bulk out of the sea to fall back into the water, raising a giant's cauldron of mountainous waves and boiling foam. When the harpooner had got in his deadly thrust he would shout in animal excitement, "Starn all, starn all!" though not a moment too soon. The giant flukes would rise from the sea and come down with a crash that would cave in the side of a ship; the water would become

red with blood, and the stricken whale would go into a Gargantuan death-agony while the whalemen stood by waiting until they could safely approach and fasten a tow-line to his dead body.

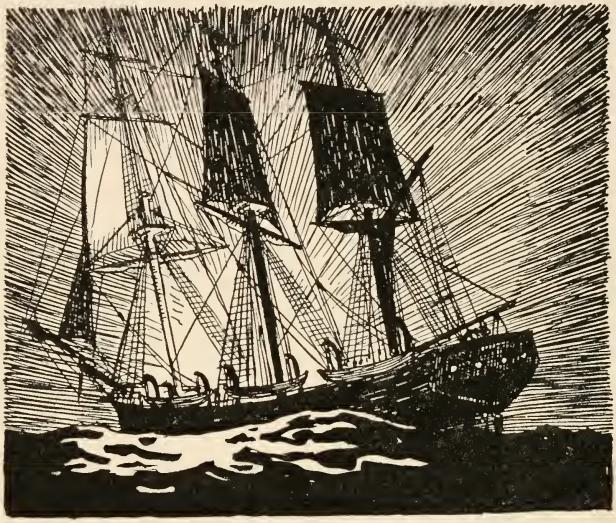
The Trying Out

The whale lies alongside the ship, secured there by a chain passing round the 'small,' which is the narrowest part of the beast's body, immediately in front of the flukes, or tail. After the killing the ship would work down to where the whale lay on its side, rolling to the swell, while in the lee of the monster the boat rode with oars 'apeak,' the crew in the meantime resting and smoking their short-stemmed pipes.

Before the ceremony of 'trying out' could begin it was necessary to perform the Brobdingnagian operation known as 'cutting in.' Huge blocks were made fast to the main-masthead, through which were rove the falls, to which, in turn, was fastened a giant hook. This monstrous claw was hooked into the blubber just at the back of the head, and, after one of the boat-steerers had made incisions about four feet apart, the windlass was manned, and the hook slowly mounted upward, bringing with it a strip of blubber four feet wide called the 'blanket piece,' which was stripped from the whale in a spiral cut, the animal rolling over and over in the water as the blubber was stripped off. When a sperm whale was caught there was the 'case'—that vast reservoir of spermaceti in the head—to deal with. This precious liquid was baled out with a bucket to the tune of 500 gallons.

The try-works were the centre around which the life of a whaler moved; they were the altar on which burnt offerings were made to the whaler's gods. The blubber, sliced up into sizable chunks, was thrown into the try-pots,

where, by means of heat, the precious oil was coaxed out of it. When trying out at night a whaler looked like nothing less than a ship on fire. Clouds of thick smoke rolled upward, while yards, sails, rigging, and smoke were lighted up from the red glare below. No need to keep a



watch with such a beacon aboard, for no ship would run down so conspicuous an object as a whaler when trying out at night.

The history of whaling extends back to the early seventeenth century, when the Dutch took their bluff-bowed ships into the Polar Seas in pursuit of the *wal.* There is an old print of Dutch whalers in the Greenland Sea. By the build and the rig of the ships the date is about 1620, but the business of whaling reached its highest development in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Then the principal whaling ports were Peterhead and Dundee,[1] in Scotland, and New Bedford, Nantucket, Sag Harbour, and New London, in the United States. And it was from these New England ports that the most successful whalers came; for the New Bedford and Nantucket whalemen took themselves and their calling seriously. They were proud of their trade, and if the merchant seaman was contemptuous of the whaleman the contempt, as I have said, was mutual.

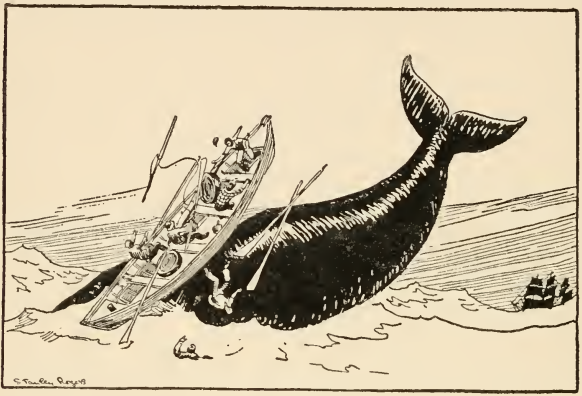
The logbooks of the American whaling-ships, with an occasional laconic entry recording an incipient mutiny suppressed or a boat or a man lost, give modest evidence of the hazards of the whaleman's life. How anybody could say whaling was a tame affair passes one's understanding. A whaler had to weather just the same gales as did his brothers of other marines, and he must frequently leave his ship and set out in a cockleshell to do battle with an animal a thousand times his own size.

Let the sceptics read this little tale—one of a hundred similar adventures with fighting whales.

Early in the last century a Nantucket whaler was off the Rio de la Plata cruising for sperm whales. Her captain, Huntting, sighted a large cachalot, which was reckoned, in the vernacular, to be a ninety-barrel bull. After some manœuvring a boat got up close enough to allow the harpooner to sink a harpoon into the animal, which at once turned and literally bit the boat in two as the men jumped for their lives. The maddened whale then smashed the wrecked craft into small pieces with its flukes. Meanwhile another boat had picked up the swimmers. The whalemen were not daunted by their experience, and before long they had planted two more

[1] Scott's Antarctic ship *Discovery* was built on the lines of a whaler at Dundee in 1900. His last ship, the *Terra Nova*, was a genuine steam whaler barque rigged and built at Dundee in 1884.

irons into the cachalot's body. Alas, the ill-mannered whale smashed up two other boats, but without killing any of the men, though they had to swim until they were picked up. Two of the twelve men in the water who were non-swimmers contrived to float on to the whale's hump, where they stayed until the animated island hurled them off. There were now six harpoons in the whale,



THE FLURRY

and 900 fathoms of line wrapped round his body or floating in a grand tangle in the sea. After the men in the water were picked up the captain's boat approached with a bomb lance containing six ounces of powder, which was fired into the whale. But before they could back their boat away their victim smashed it to wreckage and then, ironically enough, escaped.

Results: four boats and 1200 fathoms of line, not to mention harpoons and other gear, lost.

All the men were saved, and as he only had two boats left the captain gave up the chase at sunset. But he was not discouraged, and the tired men were kept at work all

night fitting out the spare boats to resume the attack by daylight. However, by morning the sea had risen to a gale, and it was impossible to launch the boats. The ship was obliged to run for Buenos Ayres for shelter, and the troublesome cachalot was never seen again.

This same Captain Huntting when a young man had had an adventure with a whale that nearly cost him his life. On an occasion when he was acting as boat-steerer a cachalot crushed the boat, and young Huntting, coming up under the wreckage, got entangled in the line which was being whipped out as the whale made away from the scene. Huntting fought to throw off the terrible line, but before getting quite free felt a jerk at his ankle, and the next moment he was being swiftly dragged under by the sounding whale. When his lungs were ready to burst the animal's speed slackened, and Huntting was able to bend his body sufficiently far to cut the line with his sheath-knife, which he had half-instinctively clutched as he went under. This saved him. He was shortly afterward picked up, and once on board ship his lacerations quickly healed, in spite of the crude and septic surgery of the day.

Fighting sperm whales were not unknown to attack ships. The sinking of the Nantucket whaler *Essex* by a mad whale is so well known in whaling history as to have become almost a classic. I have told this story elsewhere,[1] but the facts may be briefly set down. In November 1819, when the *Essex* was in the Pacific, three boats were lowered for a sperm whale, and while two of them were still away, the third having returned to the ship badly damaged, a large cachalot breached near the *Essex* and at once rammed her with his vast head. The impact was so great that the weather bows were stove in, and the ship at once began to settle. The other two boats were recalled by signals, and by the time they had returned the ship's

[1] *Ships and Sailors.*

rail was almost awash. The *Essex* foundered a few hours later, and the boats' crews faced a thousand-mile row to the nearest land. Their subsequent adventures and the record of how, among the most appalling hardships, they resorted to cannibalism, and of how but a few of them ever lived to be rescued, form one of the most terrible stories of the sea.

There are plenty of reliable records of ships being sunk by whales, and Melville's *Pequod* has been lost over and over again in actual fact.

On August 20, 1858, the New Bedford whaler *Ann Alexander* was sunk by a sperm whale. The mate had put a harpoon into the quarry, when it turned and smashed the boat. The captain's crew picked up the swimming men, but shortly afterward another boat came out from the ship, and, with the three crews divided between the two boats, the captain now ordered a renewal of the whale-hunt. But this particular cachalot had more than his share of pugnacity, and soon had destroyed a second boat. The remaining boat, now loaded with eighteen men, put back to the ship, which was seven miles away, and during the long row the wounded whale rushed at the boat, but sounded before reaching the terrified men. They had not long regained the ship when the same whale attacked the vessel and made a large hole below the water-line. The *Ann Alexander* sank so quickly that the crew had barely time to get away in the remaining boats. Fortunately, they were picked up by a ship two days later. Five

months afterward the New Bedford whaler *Rebecca Sims* captured a whale with pieces of ship's timber embedded in its head and two of the *Ann Alexander's* irons in its body!

Apart from the numerous authenticated cases, may not the cachalot be the answer to many of the riddles of the sea, cases in which ships have been lost without leaving a soul alive to tell the story? Old seamen came home with yarns of such monsters of the deep that they were received incredulously by their stay-at-home hearers; yet in the stomach of sperm whales have been found parts of the giant squid so huge that they could only belong to monsters of almost incredible size. A squid so vast that a section of one of its tentacles was thicker round than a man's body must have been a monster indeed. A cachalot that has a body large enough to encompass one of these enormous squids must himself be of formidable dimensions, and his sinking of a ship not beyond the bounds of reality.

A sailor's yarn is sometimes accepted with a grain of salt, and often enough his tall stories of giant fish or disappearing islands are disbelieved by his home-keeping friends. There is an old story which aptly illustrates this. Sailor Jack returns home to his mother and spins her a tale about the wonders he has seen, and, to make it good, he tells of the marvels of Jamaica, where there are rivers of rum and mountains of sugar, and of the Red Sea, where the anchor brought up a wheel of Pharaoh's chariot. Then, his imagination failing him for extravagant illustration, he told of other wonders, flying fish. Here his mother interrupted with, "Nay, nay, Jack! I'll believe your mountains of sugar and rivers of rum, but flying fish? Never! That's too much for any old woman to swallow."

The life on board a whaler was apt to grow monotonous if a long period elapsed between the raising of whales, and monotony leads to discontent and sometimes mutiny. Some of the bloodiest mutinies that ever took place at sea

happened on board whalers. It must be remembered that on ordinary ships the crews have no access to arms or dangerous weapons except the small sheath-knife which every sailor carries; but on a whaler are the terrible cutting-in knives, lances, and harpoons with razor edges, which lie in the whale-boats, always ready for use. When a mutiny occurred in a whaler these lethal tools were seized by the malcontents, and terrible damage was done. The murders on the *Globe* and the *Sharon* were in their day, and for many years afterward, spoken of with horror; but the massacre on the *Awashonks* is quite terrible enough for all except those whom no horror can shock.

On October 5, 1835, the whaler *Awashonks* was lying hove to off Namarik Island, one of the Marshall group, when natives came aboard ostensibly for the purpose of trade. Some of the whalemen had had previous experience of the treachery of these natives, and presumed to warn the captain of the dangers of allowing them on board in large numbers; but the captain laughed at the fears of his men and permitted the savages to swarm over the rail, mixing with the crew, trading shells and fruit for cheap trinkets and odd pieces of iron or rope.

The attack on the whalemen must have been carefully planned beforehand, for it came as an entire surprise, and, had the savages possessed the resolution to carry through their first advantage, the ship would have remained in their hands. They had quietly gathered at favourable points on the deck without alarming the officers and crew, and at a signal from their leader, who was a renegade white man turned native, possessed themselves of the terrible cutting-in spades and lances from the boats. It all happened with such suddenness that the whalemen had no time to arm themselves. The captain, standing at the break of the poop, was beheaded with a sweep of a spade from a big savage, who then attacked the terrified man at the wheel

and killed him also. The suddenness of the onslaught left no time for thoughts of defence: the only thoughts were for escape from the whirling knives. The mate was slain at the moment he jumped down the fore-hatch, and several of the crew were killed or desperately wounded as they ran toward the fo'c'sle. The second mate was stabbed to death as he sprang out on to the jib-boom. The decks were now in the possession of the savages, who lost no time in fastening the hatches and imprisoning those of the crew who had escaped below. Though knowing nothing about handling a ship, they then made an attempt to steer the ship toward the shore with the intention of beaching her. But three of the whalemen who had fled to the rigging, where no native dared to follow, perceived the savages' intent, and with great resource proceeded to render the ship helpless by sliding down from their lofty perches at the mastheads and cutting the braces. The ship, being now, so to speak, hamstrung, was a lame duck and unmanageable. Her sinews were cut, and her sails could not be trimmed to the wind, so she drifted at the whims of the tide while the murderers danced about her bloody decks.

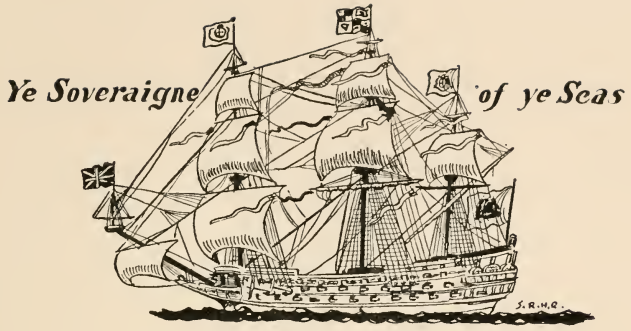
Meanwhile, nineteen white men, some six of them badly wounded, lay below. The sound men, under the third mate, decided to crawl aft in the dark over the tops of the oil-casks to the cabin, where they could secure arms if it was unoccupied. Fortune here favoured them, for the cabin was reached without adventure and the small arms secured. The plan was to rush boldly up the companion steps to attack the natives, but the door at the top was found to be fastened on the outside, and the plan had to be abandoned. A black was now seen peering down through the skylight, and before he could withdraw his woolly head the third mate shot him.

The whalemen, searching for some way out of their

desperate position, decided on the hazardous expedient of blowing open the door at the top of the companion ladder. A small keg of powder was brought up, and a train was laid to the door. The flint was struck, the train fired, and the thirteen men lay down and waited for the explosion. A moment later the door and hatch were wrecked, and many of the savages who had been standing by the companion-way were killed or wounded.

As the white men rushed through the ragged gap made by the explosion the natives fled in terror to the rail, where wounded and sound alike flung themselves overboard—some to drown, and others to swim ashore. So the bloody tragedy of the *Awashonks* was dramatically ended, and there remained but the business of clearing up the shambles of the decks and burying the dead.

Let Captain Clark and those others who have belittled the dangers of whaling think again, and see if they may not be less biased against the spouter and her crew. It has been said that men shipped aboard whalers for the same reason that men join the French Foreign Legion—to escape from some greater misery at home—a calumny that we need take no more seriously than we should if it were directed at any other branch of the ancient profession of seafaring.

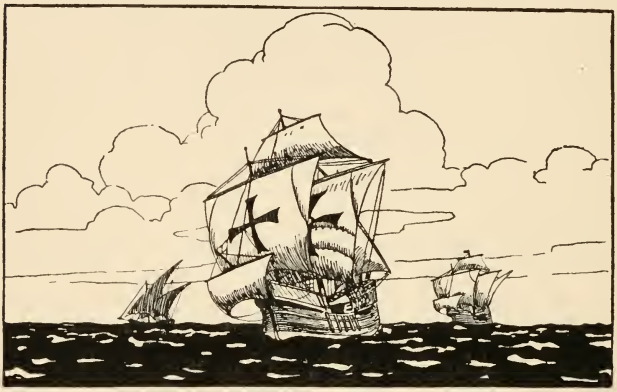


CHAPTER VIII

Famous Ships

THE Ark may be the most famous of all waterborne fabrics, but as she possessed neither mast nor sail, and bore more the character of a gigantic houseboat than a ship, we need simply salute the venerable craft and pass on. After the Ark what vessel shall we say is most renowned? The English have the *Victory*, the Americans *Old Ironsides*, the Spanish had the *Santa Maria*, the French *Le Soleil Royal*; but surely to the *Santa Maria* should go the palm. And how can we decently omit those two little ships that shared her fame, the faithful *Pinta* and *Nina*? These three vessels made a voyage that changed the whole course of history. It is true that sooner or later some ship or other would have let go her anchor off the American shore, but it was the fortune of these three small ships to be the first. And to the first-comers goes the reward. Certainly we believe that somewhere about the year 1000 Leif, son of Eric the Red, sailed his Viking ship to Greenland, or even to what is now New England, but we have no details of the discovery, still less of the ship it was made in.

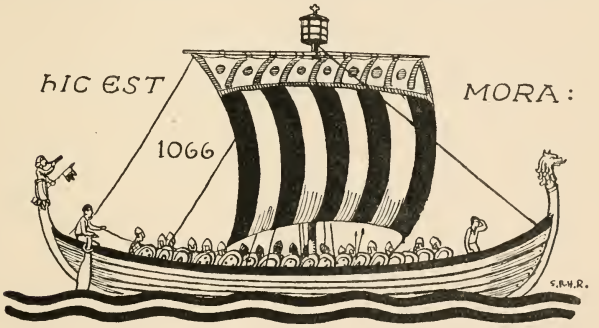
The flagship of Columbus, the *Santa Maria*, was ninety feet long, of 100 tons burden, carrying a crew of seventy, and *the only one of the three craft completely decked over*. She was originally built as a merchant-trader sailing between Spain and Flanders, and was twice the size of the *Pinta*, a vessel of 50 tons burden. The *Niña* was 40 tons. In appearance the *Santa Maria* was a typical merchant caravel.



NINA SANTA MARIA PINTA

Of her three masts the fore and main were square-rigged, the mizen carrying a lateen sail. The gear was crude; the masts, of which the main was thirty inches in diameter, were roughly hewn out of single trees, and the yards were each of two spars lashed together in the middle. The hull was fastened with iron nails and painted below water with tar, which, when dry, was well greased to lessen water-friction. When the ship required to be greased anew she was beached for that purpose. Her ballast consisted of puncheons filled with sea-water. Large stones and rocks were often used as ballast in those days, but they had a disagreeable habit of wearing a hole through the bottom.

As a humble merchantman the *Santa Maria* was almost devoid of decoration except for a certain amount of Gothic carving on the stern and in the Admiral's cabin. His bed, so his journal tells us, was draped in red; there were also a table, chairs, and a clothes-press in the cabin, which completed the furnishings. The steering was done with a tiller; the galley was an open iron-and-brick erection in the waist, and cannot have been usable in rough weather.



There was a lantern, glazed with mica, on the stern—a lantern which must often have been a star of hope to the little *Niña*, struggling along behind. Full-sized replicas of all three ships were built in Spain in 1892, and were taken across the Atlantic by Spanish crews, who followed the original course taken by Columbus. The modern-built *Santa Maria* took thirty-six days to cross, and her skipper, Captain Concas, reported that she pitched terribly. The original vessel went ashore and was wrecked on the island of San Domingo while Columbus was exploring Spain's new-found possessions.

The ships whose names are more or less familiar to us begin with the Elizabethan period. Prior to that time history was not so liberally sprinkled with ships' names as

afterward. A vessel that played a famous part in English history was William of Normandy's flagship, the *Mora*; but who is familiar with her name, and who can give an authentic description of her? The Bayeux Tapestry certainly depicts the type of ships that brought the Normans across, though the *Mora* is not singled out from the others. However, it can be fairly taken that she was like one of the more important ships in the tapestry, with a great lantern at her masthead, above the single square yard. The sail is sewn in different-coloured strips of stuff, with a decorated diaper band along the top next to the yard. The strakes are also of different colours, and the stem ends in the figurehead of an animal that appears to be a cross between a lion and a dragon. These craft were direct descendants of the Viking ships, and were very little changed in design, though not so fine in lines as the early Norse vessels.

The data concerning famous ships previous to 1500 are so meagre that it is not until we come to the era of the galleon that we can give a detailed picture of any *particular* ship. The *Henry Grâce à Dieu* set the fashion in 'tall ships,' called galleons, and she will be for ever associated with the Field of the Cloth of Gold. The oil painting entitled *The Embarkation of Henry VIII at Dover*, by Vincent Volpe, which is at Hampton Court Palace, gives us a very definite idea of this famous vessel. She is in company with a large fleet of vessels, most of which resemble the flagship in general appearance. The *Henry Grâce à Dieu* had four masts—fore, main, main mizen, and bonaventure mizen—each in a single length, with their circular fighting-tops hung with shields. The poop, the waist, and the high fo'c'sle are also hung with heraldic shields touching each other in one continuous border. She has not the quarter-gallery that was so characteristic of the later galleons, but was a tremendous ship for her day, with a burden of

1500 tons, and her armament was 184 pieces, thirty being large guns. Her career was ended by an accidental fire, which destroyed her at Woolwich in 1553.

It can be fairly said the names of Elizabethan ships that come most easily to one's mind are not the *Mary Rose*, the *Black Pinnesse*, the *Jesus of Lubeck*, or even the *Ark Royal*, but those two little vessels, the *Revenge* and the *Golden Hind*. Some years ago there was an exhibition held in London called "Shakespeare's England," which was devoted entirely to reconstructing the Elizabethan scene. A full-sized replica of the *Revenge* was built on an artificial lake in the grounds, and there was a great poring over old records and pictures for data concerning the famous vessel. Mr Seymour Lucas, R.A., as an authority on things Elizabethan, was enlisted in the cause; and though he and his collaborators searched Europe for any scrap of information to help them reconstruct the *Revenge*, they could only approximate her plans, and were compelled to proceed partly by deduction and guess-work.

This vessel is assumed to have been built at Chatham in 1579 by Sir John Hawkins himself. Her burden was 500 tons: she carried a crew of 250 men and over forty guns. The guns were very large for the period, many being twelve feet long. So, what with such a formidable armament and a crew of 250 men, she must have been a crowded ship. She was typical of a war vessel of the period, with, of course, her own especial details. Her figurehead, for instance, was a lion rampant with its gilded jaws giving defiance to her enemies. The stern was flat and highly decorated with the British lion and the Tudor rose, embodied in a design with the initials E.R. Her undying fame, even to foreign hearts, must, of course, rest on that heroic fight off Flores in 1591. As Francis Bacon wrote afterward, "This ship for the space of fifteen hours sate like a Stagge amongst Hounds and was seized and

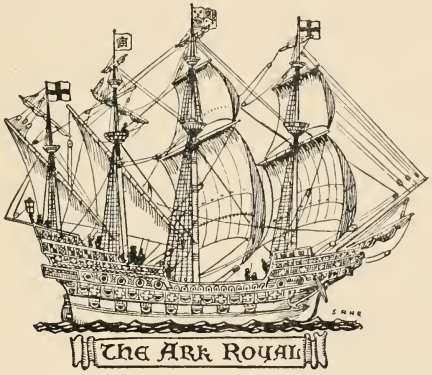
fought with in turne by fifteen great ships of Spaine: Part of a navy of fifty-five ships in all; the rest like Abettors looking on from a farre off." She very nearly missed taking part in the Flores action, for she suffered a mishap while at anchor off Rochester. A heavy wind came up which capsized her, despite the fact that she was under bare poles at the time. And there she lay for some time, bottom up in the Medway, before being righted.

Of the *Golden Hind*[1] very little is known to enable us to reconstruct her in our imagination—that is, authentically. Her tonnage is known, and also a few other details; for the rest one must take the contemporary models. Drake's voyage round the world in the *Golden Hind* was all the more remarkable in view of her modest size. Her burden was 50 tons, and her company numbered nearly 200 men. This included gentlemen, seamen, musicians, and cooks. Drake insisted on living in the grand manner, and, besides being provided with musicians to please his ear and cooks to please his palate, the officers' quarters aboard the *Golden Hind* were fitted luxuriously, while the Admiral's table was furnished with dishes of precious metals. Though the cabins were so lavishly furnished, the hull was not highly decorated, like those of so many Tudor ships. Her figurehead was probably a golden hind, and her strakes were ornamented with the typical chequered bands painted on.

Among the Tudor ships whose names are familiar I have mentioned the *Ark Royal*. Authentic descriptions of her have been found, and a contemporary print of this vessel is in the British Museum. The *Ark Royal* was built in 1587 for Sir Walter Raleigh, and was to have been christened the *Ark Raleigh*. But Queen Elizabeth took a fancy to the ship and bought her for £5000, after which the name was changed to *Ark Royal*, and so she remained

[1] Formerly called the *Pelican*.

until the end of the reign, when her name was once more changed, this time to *Anne Royal*. She lived to a good age for a ship of that period—forty-nine years. After an honourable career she met her end by being holed by her own anchor and sinking shortly afterward. The contemporary engraving of her shows a ship covered with ornament and bedizened with great banners blazing with

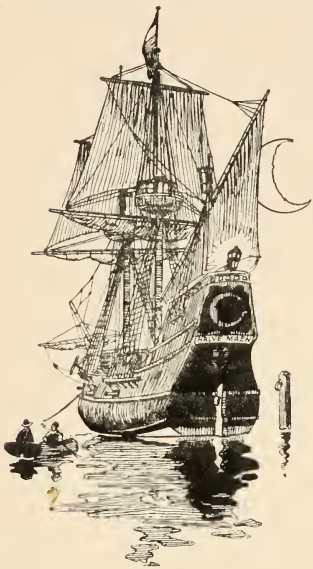


heraldry and looking more decorative than practical, though she could give a good account of herself when the occasion demanded it. She was flagship of the English fleet when it sailed out to meet the Great Armada in 1588.

A vessel with such a striking name as the *Half-moon* could hardly help being famous, but when Henry Hudson set out from Texel in her to find Cipango he was ensuring her immortality. No plans have been found, though a beautiful model (modern) of her has been built in Holland. This is quite simple in design, with a high, narrow poop and very large lattice-work tops on the main- and fore-masts. The stern is without a gallery and devoid of extraneous ornament, except for a large crescent moon

painted above a scroll bearing her name in Dutch—*Halve Maen*. A full-sized replica of her was built in 1909 and sailed over Hudson's old track, to commemorate the tercentenary of his exploration of the Hudson River.

To the English and American races the name *Mayflower* will always be linked with the Pilgrim Fathers. Her fame is real enough, but, like many other ancient vessels, her appearance may be a matter for much guesswork. She was a ship of 180 tons, though little else is known about her build. There is a conjectural model of her in the United States National Museum at Washington, which is a serious attempt to reproduce her build and rigging. A photograph of this model which is before me shows the usual merchantman of the period—bluff-bowed, with a long falsework prow, square sails on the fore and main with a lateen on the mizen. Her poop is not so high as the poops of the Elizabethan ships were, and on her quarters she has the lantern-shaped quarter-galleries of a typical ship of her day, though they are very simple and devoid of superfluous carving. With 100 people on board she was nine weeks on the historic passage from Plymouth to the New World. Her voyage began at Southampton in the company of the *Speedwell*, carrying between them 120 pilgrims. The *Speedwell* proved so dangerous and



unseaworthy that the *Mayflower* had to sail alone, leaving Plymouth on September 6, 1620, with most of the *Speedwell's* passengers as well as her own—a company of 100 people.[1] The Atlantic passage was a miserable one, full of danger with such an overcrowded ship; and one can fully understand that devout company falling on their knees in thanksgiving when they landed from a shallop on the shore of the Land of Promise on December 11. The *Mayflower* might well be called the Ship of Destiny, for had she foundered in the Atlantic, and so failed to land

that determined band of colonizers, the history of the United States might have read quite differently.

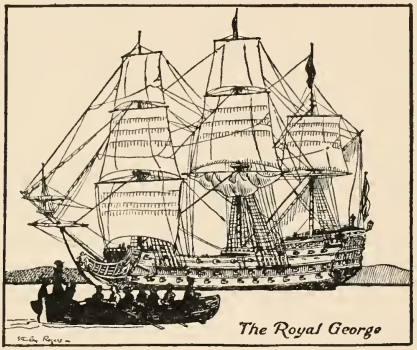
No roll of famous ships would be complete without the *Soveraigne of the Seas*, one of Phineas Pett's creations. Concerning her, Thomas Heywood wrote in 1637, "She hath three flush Deckes and a Fore-Castle, an halfe Decke, a quarter Decke, and a round house." He also mentioned, after a long inventory of her armament, that "she carrieth eleaven anchors." It was also said that she was so lavishly decorated with ornament that it would appear she had been designed more for vain show than for service to the State. She was built in 1637, and was of 1683 tons burden. The beakhead, placed low, was long and pointed like some of the Elizabethan models. Her figurehead was the effigy of King Edgar mounted on horseback, trampling over the seven kings who had rowed the royal barge round the kingdom. The engraving of her in the Science Museum

[1] Some accounts say 102.

at South Kensington is wonderfully full of detail, and gives one a vivid impression of what a magnificent ship she was. She did many years of useful service in the wars under Blake and other admirals, but met an inglorious end in 1696 at Chatham, where she accidentally caught fire and was burnt. That she was a huge ship we may know by the size of her five 'lanthorns,' the largest of which would hold ten men standing upright within it! The old ships used to carry three lanterns on the stern, in order that another vessel ahead might see at least one stern lantern when the others were hidden by the mast or the sail. These lanterns were lighted by candles, and later by sperm oil.

How few of the famous ships have escaped a tragic fate! The *Victory*, in England, and the *Constitution*, in the United States, are still existing, though most of their contemporaries have been under the sea for a hundred years. Lying in the mud underneath the water of Spithead are the rotting remains of the *Royal George*, a ship whose fame to most people rests on her having met a tragic end. She was a 100-gun ship—a first-rater—laid down at Woolwich in 1746, and foundered at Spithead in August 1782 while "being heeled to come at the pipe that leads to the well." She carried 800 men. Her tonnage was 2041, her length 178 feet. Right up to the time of her sinking she had been engaged in active service, and had been ordered to Spithead for repairs because she was found to be leaking badly. She had been the flagship, in turn, of Anson, Rodney, Howe, and Boscawen. At Quiberon Bay in 1759 she sank the *Superbe*, seventy guns, and fired the *Soleil Royal*, seventy-four guns. The story of her end is one of unrelieved horror, and is the more tragic because it could have been avoided. The practice of 'heeling' a ship over, while afloat, to make repairs to her bottom, was a common one in those times. The operation was carried out either

by shifting the ballast or by running all the guns out on one side and hauling those in on the opposite side. Now, if a ship was heeled over far enough the lower tier of gun-ports would be very close to the level of the water, and, as sometimes happened, a little sea-water might enter the ports, though not to any great extent. This is precisely what occurred to the *Royal George*, but the water was not checked in time; the ship gradually went farther over until the guns on the lower side could not be run in, nor those on the upper side run out. It happened about nine in the morning, when there were 900 men, women, and children aboard, many of them pedlars and merchants from Portsmouth.



The Royal George

On the larboard side was tied a sloop from which the *Royal George* was taking aboard casks of rum, and when the latter capsized she crushed the sloop under her great weight and took the unfortunate craft down with her. When it was found that water was coming through the lower gun-ports the carpenter reported it to the officer on duty, but the warning was ignored. Again the carpenter approached this officer, who after some delay ordered the drummer to drum all hands to 'right ship.' Those splendid sailors went below to their gun stations, and began to haul away at the gun-tackles; but it was too late. As already stated, the guns could not be run up the steeply sloping decks, and many broke from their moorings

and crashed down to the lower side only to hasten the end. A few of the unhappy creatures below managed to scramble through the upper gun-ports, which were now pointing skyward.

In full view of the fleet the great ship went down, taking with her, besides the Jews, women pedlars, and the crew, the old Admiral Kempenfelt himself. The bowsprit and tops of the masts remained above water, and on to these a few of the survivors clung until picked up. Nothing could be done for the rest—those imprisoned in the ship. A few bodies floated up during the next few days, and then the wreck lay undisturbed with her grisly secrets until 1839, when many guns, stores, and relics were brought up by divers.

Now we come to the *Victory*, the most famous of all British ships. Though she is known as Nelson's flagship, she was already a veteran before Nelson took command of her, having served many other famous admirals. Kempenfelt hoisted his flag on board her for a short period, and Howe took her to the relief of Gibraltar. Then came Hood; then Sir John Jervis (afterward Lord St Vincent) had her at the battle of St Vincent, when Nelson was aboard the *Captain*. She was launched in 1765, but did not receive her baptism of fire until thirteen years had passed, when Admiral Keppel commanded her in the indecisive battle of Ushant in 1778. She was considerably battered in this action, as also in the St Vincent fighting, though she received the most harm at Trafalgar, both in loss of men and material damage. Practically all her rigging was cut to pieces, her spars were so smashed and riddled that they were useless and unsafe, her mizen topmast was brought down, and her fore- and main-masts were shot through, while her sails were riddled with holes. Part of her foresail was found in an old loft at Chatham Dockyard sixty-five years after the battle, the canvas being

found to be badly torn and stained with blood. The hull also received its share of the gun-fire.

The *Victory* carried 100 guns, and when she was launched took the name of a former ship, as has been the practice in the British Navy. Her tonnage is (one must speak in

the present tense) 2162, a little greater than that of the *Royal George*. Like this ship, and indeed all big ships of the period, the *Victory* was built in a dry dock, and floated out on a high tide, this being an easier method of launching and also having the great merit of ensuring the success of that operation. Only the lighter ships, such as frigates and still smaller craft, were launched from 'ways.' In Nelson's time the *Victory* used hempen cables for her great anchors, chain cable not coming into use until 1812. The expression 'the Nelson touch' was very significant in the

little Admiral's own time, so much so that he was the arbiter of fashion in the Navy during his last years. It was Nelson who, to the regret of all artists, simplified the colour scheme in vogue on eighteenth-century men-of-war by ordaining that all his ships should be painted black with a band of yellow running along the level of each tier of gun-ports. The lids of the ports were painted black, and thus came about the familiar chequered-band effect we now associate with the *Victory*. Her figurehead was an oval shield bearing the royal arms, and supported by the full-length figures of a sailor and a marine. There is a story that, during the memorable fight, the sailor had an arm shot away and the soldier had a leg similarly treated. When the casualties on board were examined it was found that those who had lost an arm were sailors and those who had lost a leg were marines.

Hand in hand with the *Victory* should go the *Fighting Temeraire*, which shared the *Victory's* fame at Trafalgar. She is often confused with the French-built ship of the same name launched in 1759, and captured by Admiral Boscawen. The *Fighting Temeraire* of Trafalgar fame was launched at Chatham in 1798. She followed the *Victory* into action, and during the *mêlée* fouled the rigging of the French man-of-war *Fougeux*, whereupon the captain of the *Temeraire* ordered his ship to be lashed to the *Fougeux* with the object of boarding; which object was accomplished within ten minutes by a boarding-party of thirty men. The *Fougeux* was made a prize, and the desperate nature of the action was attested by the condition of the *Temeraire's* rigging, which was cut to pieces, while her hull was a wreck. It is interesting to note that Turner, who painted the famous picture of the old ship, knew more about her history than some of the naval authorities, a fact which was disclosed when naval critics questioned the artist's knowledge of the ship. Turner was able

to prove himself right on every point brought up for criticism.

We notice what huge, wall-sided structures the first-rate men-of-war of this period were. War-ships were becoming more deadly engines of destruction, and to that end their ancient beauty was being sacrificed. The graceful sweep of the sheer line was being superseded by a flat deck from stem to stern. The heavy carved ornament had degenerated into a trivial bit of scroll-work here and there that was the last pathetic vestige of the brave old galleons of the Tudors and the Stuarts. Soon the beauty of the men-of-war was to go altogether during that period of transition from sail to steam when the sail area was cut down and the hulls resembled boxes from out of which stuck, straight up, iron tubes belching heavy black smoke. But it is to be expected that at a period when ugliness had supplanted beauty on land it should also supplant it on the sea.

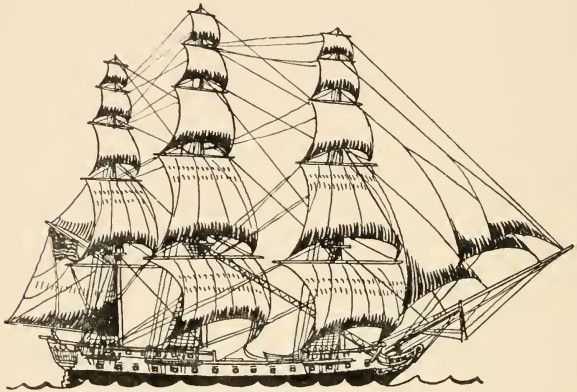
It is strange that, while Trafalgar in 1805 added such lustre to the British Navy, only seven years later she should suffer many small defeats in sea-skirmishes (one cannot call them battles) with the young American fleet during the War of 1812.

A redoubtable and justly famous ship is the U.S.S. *Constitution*,[1] better known to many people as *Old Ironsides*. She was launched in 1797 at Boston. Her armament was forty-four guns—twenty-two on the spar deck and the same number on the gun deck. She was built with the object of surpassing in speed and armament the frigates of England and France, an ambition which was realized during the War of 1812. This type of frigate carried an enormous spread of sail on exceptionally tall masts for such craft. An idea of her lofty spars can be gathered

[1] Still in existence at the Charleston Navy Yard, Boston, U.S.A.

from the statement that the foreroyal bowline was 310 feet long.

On August 9, 1812, the British frigate *Guerrière* was on the way to Halifax to refit, when she fell in with the *Constitution*. A hot action followed as soon as the two ships were within range, and continued until the worn-out



"U. S. S. Constitution

old *Guerrière* struck her colours, being then in a sinking condition. Against the *Constitution's* armament of forty-four guns the *Guerrière* carried thirty-eight pieces. For an hour the two frigates manœuvred for an advantage until, tiring of this, Captain Dacres, of the *Guerrière*, ran his ship down toward his rival with the object of boarding. The wise American captain withheld his fire until the British vessel was within pistol-shot, when he poured a whole broadside at point-blank range into the soft timbers of the *Guerrière*. The result was a *débâcle*. The British sailors upheld the traditions of gallantry, but soon the

Guerrière's decks were a shambles. Fifty men were killed, and over sixty others lay wounded. The ship herself was sorely stricken. All her masts were brought down by the withering fire from the *Constitution*, and there was nothing to do but strike the flag. She was, in fact, so badly hammered that the victors set her on fire, deeming her not worth taking as a prize.

The superior speed of these American frigates was well proved in 1812, when, off the New Jersey coast, the *Constitution* had an opportunity of showing the value of her enormous sail-spread in getting away from a British squadron after being chased for three days. Not the least interesting part of her history is the misadventure to her figureheads, a story that has its comic side. Her first figurehead represented Hercules, though some said it was Neptune. Hercules or Neptune it little matters, since this dual person got blown to pieces by the *Guerrière's* guns. After the fight, when the *Constitution* was being patched up, a scroll was hurriedly set up in place of the missing figurehead. This harmless ornament was allowed to grace the frigate's bows until the year 1843, when a group of politicians removed the modest scroll and caused to be erected in its place a splendid and dramatic full-length figure of President Andrew Jackson, nicknamed the 'Big Knife of Tennessee.' Now there happened to be in Boston, where the *Constitution* was lying in harbour, certain men who had no love for Andrew Jackson or his political party, and who showed their disapproval of the wooden effigy by stealing in a mob aboard the frigate as she rode at anchor and sawing off the figure's head, an action that has features reminiscent of the Boston Tea-party of sixty years before.

During this same unfortunate and stupid war there took place another naval action, which brought immortality to the British frigate *Shannon* in that heart-stirring duel with

the U.S.S. *Chesapeake* on June 1, 1813. The victory of the *Shannon* was balm to British pride, which had suffered so, not only at the defeat of the *Guerrière*, but for many smaller losses at sea. The *Yankee Wasp* beat the *Frolic*, and the British brig *Peacock*, eighteen guns, was defeated off Demerara by the U.S.S. *Hornet*, eighteen guns, after a quarter of an hour's duel. Such was the state of affairs when Captain Philip Bowes Vere Broke sailed from Halifax in the *Shannon* to cruise in enemy waters. The *Shannon* was accompanied by the frigate *Tenedos*, and both vessels arrived off Boston Harbour at the end of March 1813. They waited outside for a month, hoping that the three American frigates at anchor in the harbour would come out and give battle. On May 1, during a heavy fog, two of the enemy ships, the *President* and the *Congress*, put to sea and eluded the British sentinels. Captain Broke knew that the sole remaining Yankee frigate, the *Chesapeake*, would hardly be rash enough to come out while the two British frigates awaited her, so, as senior officer, he ordered Captain Parker, of the *Tenedos*, to proceed on a cruise and rejoin him at a rendezvous six weeks later. Captain Broke now settled down to wait for the *Chesapeake* to come out and fight. He sent several verbal messages to Captain Lawrence, the Yankee commander, but as none of them reached him, Broke finally addressed a letter to his adversary which reads like the lines out of a medieval romance. He sent his message on June 1 to Lawrence, then aboard his ship in Boston Harbour, by Captain Slocum, a released American prisoner, though the note was never delivered,

THE "CHESAPEAKE" AND THE "SHANNON"

the gallant Lawrence having already left to engage the *Shannon*. Broke's request for a fight read, in part:

> As the *Chesapeake* appears now ready for sea I request you will do me the favour to meet the *Shannon* with her, ship to ship, to try the fortune of our respective flags. . . . I entreat you, sir, not to imagine that I am urged by mere personal vanity to the wish of meeting the *Chesapeake* ; or that I depend only upon your personal ambition for your acceding to this invitation; we have both nobler motives. . . .
>
> Favour me with a speedy reply. We are short of provisions and water, and cannot stay long here.

The *Chesapeake* carried fifty guns and a crew of 376 men: the *Shannon* had forty-six guns and 306 men—not her full complement, as a number of men were in hospital at Halifax, Nova Scotia. Captain Lawrence was aware of the size and armament of the *Shannon*, and he left ashore five of his guns to equalize the armament of the two frigates—a gesture as chivalrous as it was rash. When the *Chesapeake* left her moorings and sailed out to meet the *Shannon* she was actually followed by a large number of small pleasure craft full of Bostonians who expected an easy victory for their sailors. And they had reason, for the British Navy had hardly played a glorious part in this war. Indeed, so sure were the Americans of the outcome of the fight that they took on board an open-topped barrel filled with wrist-irons, ready to clap on the *Shannon's* crew when they had captured her. All afternoon on that unforgettable day the two frigates manœuvred for position, until five o'clock in the afternoon, when the *Shannon* hauled up to allow the *Chesapeake* to come into range. In these days, when cruisers fight at a range of some miles, it is remarkable to read that the two frigates approached to within fifty yards of each other before a shot was fired! Then the *Shannon's* men gave three huzzas, and her first gun spoke.

The action was quickly decided: within twenty minutes the fight was over, the *Chesapeake* being in the hands of a boarding-party from the *Shannon* and her flag struck. Thousands of people on the shore saw the battle from the beginning to the end. The casualties were heavy, the *Chesapeake* faring the worst, with sixty-one killed and a hundred wounded. The *Shannon's* casualties were twenty-four killed and fifty-nine wounded. Captain Lawrence was killed, and Captain Broke was wounded. Though the American frigate suffered such a heavy defeat, the knowledge that her men fought with fine courage must in a measure have softened the wound to national pride.

The fight was over. The sightseers sailed back to Boston, and a prize crew from the *Shannon* took the crippled *Chesapeake* with her prisoners up to Halifax in company with the victor. *Victis honos!*

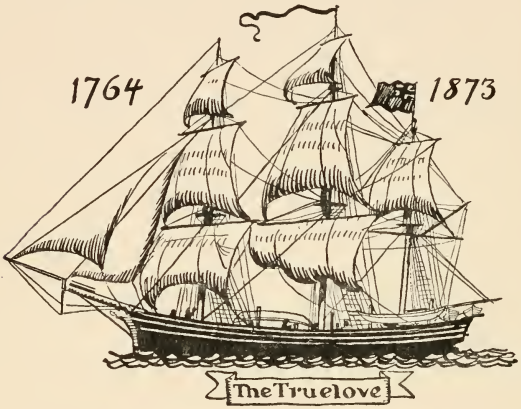
CHAPTER IX

Famous Ships—continued

UNTIL about 1800 all merchant ships were potential men-of-war. They all carried guns, and the vessels of the Honourable East India Company went armed like frigates. The lawlessness at sea made this necessary. Every merchantman had to be prepared for pirates or privateers, and it was not until after Queen Victoria had ascended the throne that peaceful merchantmen gave up the custom of carrying guns. Piracy had become unfashionable, and sailing in convoy for safety's sake was no longer necessary. Up to the end of the eighteenth century, as we have seen, most of the notable ships of history were warships. The *Mora*, the *Mary Rose*, the *Revenge*, the *Golden Hind*, the *Ark Royal*, the *Soveraigne of the Seas*, to mention a few, were all men-of-war; but now we come to the era of famous merchant ships. The nineteenth century not only marked the end of lawlessness at sea, but it also heralded the arrival of the clipper ship. Of this more anon.

For the moment let us stop and pay homage to the humble little ship *Truelove*, whose claim to immortality rests on her remarkable longevity. She was launched at Philadelphia in 1764, and sailed the seas for 109 years! For twenty years she sailed as a merchantman for her American owners. In 1784 a British man-of-war took her as a prize while cruising in the Atlantic, whence she was

sent to Hull. Here she fitted out for a whaling voyage. As this voyage under her new owners proved successful, she took part in the whale fishery until 1795, when her cranes and whale-boats were taken out in order to convert her for the Oporto wine trade. After a year of this she was sent back to whaling again until 1803, when she cruised with letters of marque as a privateer. Such a



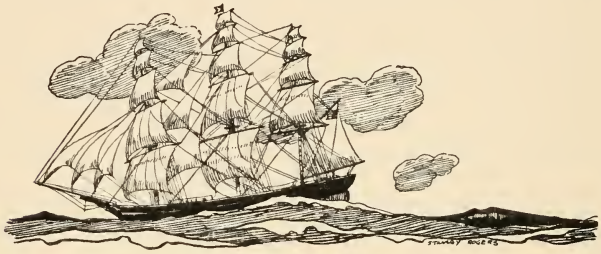
trade did not suit her honest character, and before long she was sent to explore the Davis Straits. On her return she became a trader to Archangel and Stockholm for some years, until 1831. By this time the *Truelove* was sixty-seven years old—a great age for any ship. The owners examined her and found her so sound that she was once more fitted out for whaling. So it happened that in her old age she was sent to Davis Straits as a whaler, and a whaler she remained for the next forty-two years! In 1868, at the age of 104 years, she retired with a grand total of 500 whales taken. Five years later she crossed the Atlantic to visit again her birthplace, Philadelphia,

whence she returned to be broken up. One hundred and nine years old, and engaged most of her life in the very strenuous business of whaling! Such a vessel is worthy of a place in the sailing-ship's Valhalla.

The American ships were usually built of soft wood, such as pine, so that if the *Truelove* was a 'soft-wood ship' her record of longevity under hard conditions is all the more remarkable, for one would not expect a pine-built vessel to last as long as an oak-built one. Another vessel, a brig, which earned a local fame for her long life, was the *Brotherly Love*, of Ipswich. It is an interesting coincidence that she bore a similar name to the Philadelphian craft, besides living in the same era and to about the same age. Her history can be traced from the date of her launch in 1764 until she was run down and sunk in 1878—114 years! She was a collier brig, and is said to have been engaged in the coasting trade during the whole of her existence. Though she seems to have reached a more venerable age than that of the *Truelove*, yet the brig's record cannot compare with the whaler's for variety of interest.

The clipper-ship era, which was responsible for the birth of so many famous ships, began with the building of those types of fast sailing sloops and brigs called Baltimore clippers as far back as 1812; but the true clipper-ship design did not develop until the advent of the *Ann McKim*, of Baltimore, in 1832. She was not a famous ship except inasmuch as she was something new. Nothing like her had ever been built, and she undoubtedly influenced the shipbuilders to imitate her lines. She was to a certain extent what we should call nowadays of streamline form, a science to which no one had hitherto given a thought. Among ships whose title to fame is their fine design for speed the most famous would be the fastest sailer. But what was the fastest sailing-ship ever launched? That depends on whether we mean for a short burst of speed or

for the duration of a long passage. The most renowned American clipper was the *Flying Cloud*, which could do the passage around the Horn from New York to San Francisco in eighty-nine days—a speed which in these days of aeroplanes may appear remarkably slow, though it means an *average* of about 220 miles a day, *with the wind often against the ship*. She was built by Donald Mackay at Boston in 1851, and for some years she took out miners and emigrants to California and brought gold back. Like



THE "FLYING CLOUD"

many a famous ship, she had a Viking's funeral, for she was destroyed by fire in September 1874 at St John, New Brunswick.

There was another American clipper, the *Challenge*, whose masts were so lofty and whose spars were so long that when in dock at high tide her jib-boom towered over the neighbouring rooftops. Her captain was the notorious Bully Waterman, who had commanded the *Seawitch*. He was noted for being a ship-driver and a man-driver. If we are to credit the stories about Captain Waterman he was a devil in human shape, a smug hypocrite ashore who, when he went aboard his ship, would order the steward to bring him a bucket of sea-water to wash off his shore face. Like most American ships, the *Challenge* was very smart

in appearance, and thoroughly justified the sea-chanty which runs:

A Yankee ship comes down the river,
Blow, boys, blow!
Her masts and yards they shine like silver,
Blow, my bully boys, blow,

though such a reputation was only gained by keeping the crew everlastingly scraping, holystoning, and painting.

The first ship to make a fast passage to Australia was the early clipper *Marco Polo*, of the Black Ball Line, built at St John, New Brunswick, in 1852. The low level to which art had fallen in the Victorian period is illustrated in a description of the *Marco Polo's* cabin decorations. The ceiling of the dining-cabin was of maple. The panels on the walls were richly ornamented with silvered glass and coins of various nations incorporated in the design, while over large circular apertures in the walls were sheets of plate-glass painted handsomely with scrolls and foliage. Furthermore, the cabins were 'tastefully' furnished with crimson velvet cushions, stained-glass panels, and heavily ornamented pilasters. The *Marco Polo's* first captain was another notorious driver of ships and men, but a fine seaman who, when in command of the clipper, was the originator of the phrase, "To hell or Melbourne in sixty days," which frightened both passengers and crew. The *Marco Polo* collided with an iceberg off Cape Horn while homeward bound in March 1861, and when she put into Valparaiso for repairs the officers reported an amazing story which was verified by the passengers. When the collision happened there could be plainly seen on top of the berg, lying as if asleep, the body of a frozen sailor. He was without a hat, but his clothes were in good condition; and by his side was a boat-hook to which was fastened a piece of red woollen material, which he had probably prepared for signalling. The *Marco Polo* hove to so close

that the hair of the dead sailor could be seen blowing about in the wind.

Captain Forbes, of the *Marco Polo*, one of the most

"THE WILD BOAT OF THE ATLANTIC"

famous captains of his time, next took command of the clipper *Lightning*, said to be the fastest ship that ever sailed. She was built in America for a British firm in 1854, and her best day's run was 436 nautical miles, while

her shortest Atlantic passage was done in thirteen days nineteen and a half hours. That was from Boston Light to Liverpool. The *Lightning* was one of the most graceful ships ever built, her lines being almost those of a yacht, and her figurehead, appropriately, was a full-length figure of a young woman holding a golden thunderbolt.

An interesting and distinguished member of the clipper-ship family was the *Dreadnought*, quite as well known by the name "The Wild Boat of the Atlantic." She was of the 1853 vintage, and went immediately into the Atlantic ferry service after her launch. In 1864 she was taken off this route and put into the Cape Horn fleet, running to San Francisco and Honolulu to collect the casks of whale oil left at those ports by the Pacific whale-ships. In 1869 the famous old vessel left New York for the Pacific on what turned out to be her last voyage. This ship, which had earned a name for weathering the worst storms, actually met her end in a calm sea. She was on her way to San Francisco, and had reached the Strait of Magellan, when she fell into a calm without the faintest breeze stirring, and a heavy swell gradually carried her on to the rocky coast. When it was seen that she was drifting ashore, strenuous efforts were made by the crew in the ship's boats to tow her off the land, but it was of no avail. She went on to the rocks and was a total loss, while the shipwrecked crew spent three weeks on the barren coast before they were picked up by a passing ship. Captain Samuels, the first captain of the *Dreadnought*, had to give up command of her owing to a broken leg received during a rough Atlantic passage. Samuels was one of the old type of commanders who ruled his packet-rats with iron discipline, and earned renown for the way he suppressed a mutiny aboard the *Dreadnought* during one of its Atlantic passages.

The names of famous clippers crowd upon me. I must choose; but I find the task exceedingly difficult.

There was the *Great Republic*, the largest clipper ever built, the ship that by catching fire from falling sparks and being gutted alongside the fitting-out dock became a wreck before she ever sailed. She was rebuilt, however, and sailed to London, where she had to lie in the Thames, as no dock was big enough to accommodate her. If the *Great Republic* was the largest, and the *Lightning* the fastest, the *Sir Lancelot* was the most beautiful of the clippers. She was a composite ship—that is, built of iron frames

THE "GREAT REPUBLIC"

and wooden planking—and was launched in 1865 for the tea trade. Her figurehead was, of course, a knight in armour, Sir Lancelot himself. In 1866, while in the English Channel, she had the doleful experience of getting completely dismasted; but, with the aid of a jury mast and after Herculean labour, the ship was brought like a crippled bird into Falmouth.

In the tea race of 1866 from the Pagoda Anchorage, Foochow, to London, there took part some of the most famous ships of the nineteenth century. There was a friendly rivalry between the captains to get to London first for the honour of their ships; but there was also the more practical reason for speed, that of getting to London with the first tea cargo of the season. In 1866 there started

from Foochow, almost simultaneously, a whole fleet of the clippers, bent on a race to London. The race was followed closely by the newspapers of the day, and public excitement became intense. As the days went by most of the fleet became separated across the Indian Ocean; but a few of the leaders kept amazingly close together. Coming up the Atlantic after rounding the Cape of Good Hope, three of the clippers crossed the Equator on the same day: these were the *Ariel*, *Fiery Cross*, and *Taeping*, the *Serica* and the *Taitsing* being close behind. In latitude 12° 29′ N. the *Taeping* and the *Fiery Cross* were so close together that they exchanged signals, the *Ariel* being about twenty-four hours behind. For over a week the *Taeping* and *Fiery Cross* remained in sight of each other until the latter had the ill-fortune to fall into a dead calm, while she saw her rival pick up a breeze and sail away to the north. The *Fiery Cross* was becalmed twenty-four hours before she picked up a wind. In the meanwhile the *Serica* and *Taitsing* had made up distance and were close behind. Approaching the Western Isles, the *Ariel* was in the lead, with the *Fiery Cross* next. On September 5 the *Ariel* sighted Bishop's Rock at the mouth of the Channel. At daybreak those aboard this ship saw a sail coming up astern. It was the *Taeping*. The two ships were doing fourteen knots with all sails set, and by 8 A.M. the Lizard was abeam. By noon these two thoroughbreds were racing past Start Point; at midnight they were opposite Beachy Head, the *Ariel* leading. At three the next morning, nearing Dungeness, they reduced sail and sent up rockets for a pilot. An hour later they hove to and signalled with flares. At 5 A.M. the *Taeping* was close astern the *Ariel*, while both ships took a pilot aboard. At six o'clock they stood away for the South Foreland, *Ariel* still leading. Off Deal both ships furled their sails and signalled for tugs. The *Taeping* got the first and most powerful

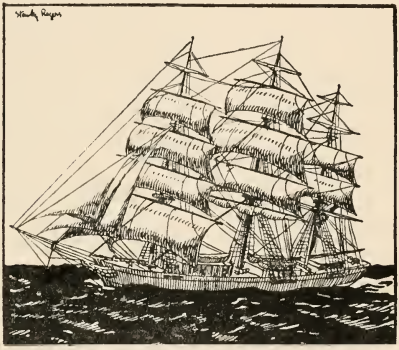
tug, and so reached Gravesend fifty-five minutes ahead of the *Ariel*. Here she anchored while waiting for the tide. The *Ariel* having come up in the meantime, both vessels proceeded up the river, the *Ariel* arriving at East India Dock gates at 9 P.M. The *Taeping* reached the London Docks, farther up the river, at 10 P.M.; but, being of shallower draught than the *Ariel*, she was able to go through the lock at once, and was actually docked twenty minutes

THE "THERMOPYLÆ"

ahead of her rival. A remarkably close finish to a race that lasted ninety-nine days and extended half across the world.

The *Taeping* and *Ariel* can be considered to have finished in a dead heat; but close on their heels was the fast *Serica*. She reached her berth at the West India Docks at midnight of the same day as the two dead-heaters. Thus three ships arrived on the same tide after a ding-dong battle for over three months! The poor *Fiery Cross*, which had held the lead for so long, arrived twenty-four hours later, and *Taitsing* was close on her heels. These five ships, so well matched, immortalized their names for ever among the famous clippers of the world.

The last of an extinct race is the *Cutty Sark*, a fine old clipper that is now living in honourable retirement at Falmouth. In the halcyon days of her youth she had only one serious rival, and that was the renowned *Thermopylæ*, a fine sailer that rode the worst seas like a duck. But for a British tea-clipper the *Cutty Sark* holds the record for a day's run, her best being 363 knots. The *Thermopylæ's* best was 358 knots. The *Cutty Sark* was launched in 1869, and until quite recently had been hard at work since the day she was put afloat. Her original figurehead, a beautiful woman, was a full-length portrait of Nannie, the witch in Burns's poem *Tam o' Shanter*. The cutty sark was the garment worn by Nannie, and a more bizarre name for a noble ship would be hard to find.



SPREADING HER WINGS

> Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
> That while a lassie she had worn,
> In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
> It was her best, and she was vauntie.

But the outstretched arm of the original figurehead was washed away years ago in the Roaring Forties. When in port the sailors would put a horse's tail in Nannie's hand, the tail of the old mare, Meg. On the scroll-work of the clipper's bow when she was built there was a string of

naked witches dancing in fine abandon, but that was too much for the Victorian mind, and these damsels were taken off.

I spoke of the *Thermopylæ* being the *Cutty Sark's* only rival. The latter excelled on a best day's run, the former was fastest on a passage. In other words, the *Thermopylæ's* average speed was the faster. The *Thermopylæ* ended her days in Portugal, to whom she was sold in 1895. She was used in the Tagus as a training-ship for boys. She was kept there until 1907, when, being condemned as unfit, she was towed out to sea and sunk by gun-fire.

We have now reached the age of steam, when most of the famous vessels have one or more iron tubes rearing above the decks, out of which pours dirty black smoke. Strictly speaking, steamers have no place in our pageant of ships; but there was built in the fifties of the last century a steamship of such a remarkable character that it would be a pity not to include her in this marine review. I refer to the famous *Great Eastern*, which was the wonder of the Victorian age. She was by far the largest ship in the world when she was launched in 1858, and it was not until forty years later, when the White Star *Oceanic* was built, that her size was exceeded.

In the days when the transatlantic steamers were 300 feet long and had a tonnage of 2000, the appearance of a ship 679 feet in length and with a tonnage of 19,000 was bound to create a sensation. She was a veritable Leviathan among ships, and was far ahead of her time. She was propelled by two paddle-wheels and a single screw, and though primarily a steamship carried sails on her six masts,[1] according to a practice which did not die out until some time about 1890. The intention was to build a ship that could carry a large number of passengers and a

[1] The *Great Eastern* was square-rigged on two masts and schooner-rigged on the other four.

big cargo to Australia without having to stop and coal on the way. She had accommodation for 4000 passengers, an unheard-of number to travel in one ship. Isambard Brunel, the famous bridge-builder, conceived and built her, at once his greatest masterpiece and his greatest failure. For this colossal vessel was too large to be profitable. Fortunes were lost in building her, and her whole history was a chain of accidents. She stuck on the way when the first attempt was made to launch her, and when she was eventually floated a boiler exploded on her trial run and seven men were killed. But her passenger-carrying experiments did not earn sufficient money to pay for maintenance and repairs, and she was put into service laying the Atlantic cable. For this work she was eminently suitable, her vast holds being ideal for accommodating the enormous length of cable needed to span the Atlantic. After the cable-laying was completed she degenerated to the position of a coal-hulk at Gibraltar, whence she was brought back by a showman, who paid £26,000 for her (she originally cost £700,000) and charged so much a head for the curious to wander over her vast decks and through her dilapidated cabins. She was at last broken up in 1888 on the banks of the Mersey. When the ship-breakers had stripped off the iron plating down to the keel they found between the plates of her double bottom the skeleton of a man—some unfortunate workman who had been imprisoned there when the ship was built.

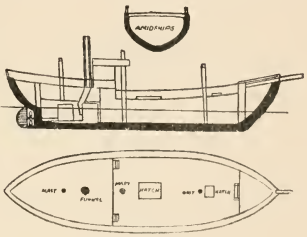
In 1899—eleven years after the demise of the *Great Eastern*—the *Oceanic* was launched. She had a length of 705 feet, and was the first vessel in the world to exceed Brunel's masterpiece of 1858.

Among the many polar ships whose names are indelibly engraved on our memories are Scott's *Terra Nova* and Shackleton's vessel, the ill-fated *Endurance*, which was crushed in the polar ice-pack in 1915. The *Endurance*,

like the *Terra Nova*, was barquentine-rigged. Two polar vessels that will for ever be immortal in English history were the *Erebus* and *Terror*, Sir John Franklin's ships. They left the Thames in the month of May 1845, provisioned and equipped for three years, to try to find a North-west Passage. A few months later a whaler brought news of having seen them moored alongside an iceberg in Baffin's Bay, but that was the last ever heard of them. In the following years search expeditions were sent out, but no living member of Franklin's ships was ever seen again. In 1850 traces of the catastrophe were found in the shape of canvas, rope, tins, a cask, a message or two, and finally the frozen bodies of two of the men lying by a rotting boat. Some of these relics are now in the Greenwich Museum.

Two small vessels which deserve a wider acclaim than they perhaps get are the *Gjoa* and the *Fram*. Both are still in existence. First the *Fram*. She is the most famous polar ship that ever floated. Famous because of her radical design, and because she had the honour of being commanded by two of the greatest polar explorers who ever lived, Fridtjof Nansen and Roald Amundsen. She was designed by the famous Colin Archer, an Englishman, whom Nansen asked to design a wooden vessel that would be able to withstand the terrific ice pressure in the polar seas. Archer formed the opinion that no vessel could resist the pressure of millions of tons pressing upon it, and bethought himself of a better plan. So he designed a ship that would not *resist* pressure, but *take advantage* of it! The ordinary wall-sided vessel was gripped between the moving ice-packs and crushed like an eggshell; but the *Fram* was designed with such sloping sides and ends that the ice could not get a grip on the hull any more than you could get a grip on one side of a piece of wet soap. When the ice closed in it lifted the *Fram* out of

danger, and enabled the ship to winter in the floes with perfect safety. Shackleton lost the *Endurance* by being caught in the ice-pack with a ship not designed for such an emergency. The *Fram* is a small vessel of 402 tons gross, with, as I have said, sloping sides and no projections for the ice to get a grip on. She was built mainly of oak, with breast hooks and straps of iron. Her hull has the almost incredible thickness of twenty-eight inches of solid oak planking in three layers. Her stem is built up of oak beams four feet thick, and her rudder is below the water-line to minimize danger from collision with ice.



THE "FRAM"

Rigged as a three-masted schooner, she was propelled mainly by sail, but carried auxiliary power in a triple-expansion steam-engine of 220 horse-power, later removed. On her Farthest North voyage with Nansen she carried provisions for men and dogs sufficient for five years, coal for four months, and eight boats. Quite a cargo for a vessel only 128 feet long! The great advantage of the *Fram* was that the explorers were able to spend the winter comfortably in the ship with no danger of being lost in the ice. During the long polar night her rudder was hauled up out of danger from the ice, and her windmill rigged to drive the dynamo that provided the ship with light and so robbed the Arctic winter of its terror. After serving Nansen well the *Fram*, as most people know, took Amundsen on his successful voyage to the Antarctic in 1912, when he was first to reach the South Pole.

The *Gjoa* carried Amundsen through the North-west Passage, that maze of islands, straits, peninsulas, and

sea-ice which had defied navigators since the beginning of history. In June 1903 the *Gjoa* sailed from Oslo (then Christiania), and over three years later reached the Pacific *via* the north of Canada. To look at, the *Gjoa* was not impressive and would pass unnoticed among other ships in a harbour. Her tonnage was 70, and she was rigged as a cutter.[1] To assist her sails, a heavy oil-engine was fitted to turn a single screw. She was built in 1872, and before Amundsen bought her she had served in turn as a fishing-boat and a sealer, and had proved her staunchness for the work ahead. Amundsen took with him six companions, and in the tiny cabin, only six feet by nine, these men lived for over three years. On her historic passage she twice caught on fire, once went aground, and was twice frozen in the ice. In the summer of 1906 she crawled into Nome, Alaska, leaking and in a more or less crippled state. Her broken gaff was spliced, her seams were caulked, and she continued southward to San Francisco, which she reached in October 1906. Her working days were over, for here she was hauled ashore to her last moorings. She rests on permanent ways in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, where those who wish may come and pay her homage so long as her rotting planks hold together.

THE "GJOA"

[1] A cutter is a single-masted yacht carrying a bowsprit.

CHAPTER X

Quarterdeck and Fo'c'sle

THE sailor lives in a totally different world from the landsman, so different that he might be a creature of another planet who pays occasional visits to this earth. A sea life breeds, spiritually and mentally, a different animal from his counterpart ashore. Life afloat is austere: it demands more of a man than does life on land. The sea is no place for weaklings, as many a mother's son of tender years has found on his first voyage. It is true that life on board a modern steamship is nothing like what it was in the days of oak and hemp, but, even so, the influence of the sea is still there and a sailor remains a man apart. The old brutality has gone, along with the salt junk and weevilly biscuit. Knuckle-dusters and flogging are illegal, but the spirit of the sea remains.

Let us meet some of the crew of a typical sailing-ship of fifty years ago. First the captain. People ask why the captain, who has a staff of capable officers to deputize for him, should at times have to remain on deck for, let us say, two or three days without sleep or rest. The answer is mainly that the captain, and not the officers, is responsible for the ship's safety. In remaining on deck when going through unusually bad weather the captain is only looking after his own interests. There is, of course, the human element of jealousy. An old clipper captain was jealous of his position, and would never allow his

officers to forget that he, and he alone, was absolute monarch in his own domain. A little childish, this professional jealousy, perhaps, but there was something heroic in the aloofness of those old sea-dogs. The loneliness of the captain, even when he was a devil, had something pathetic in it, as there is in all loneliness. No wonder captains grew 'queer' as they got older. But what magnificent men most of them were: hard and unlovable, but men who commanded respect. The old sailing-ship captain reached his position through force of character in the process of the survival of the fittest in the hardest school in the world. Unfortunately—for the crew—the most capable captains were usually the hardest. By hard I mean to the extent of cruelty, if to keep men at work until they drop, and to award them the most degrading punishments for absurdly trifling offences, or even for no offence at all if the master had to vent his spleen on some one, is to be cruel.

The captain is the director of the concern, but the mate is the manager, who acts as spokesman for the captain and sees that his wishes are carried out. As the mate's next step in promotion is to be commander he must have the qualifications for that post. His job is an onerous one, for he is in the paradoxical position of being at once both servant and master. And if the captain happens to be a cantankerous old tyrant the mate's life can be made a hell from which there is no escape.

The duties of the rest of the 'afterguard,' the second

and third mates, are similar to those of the mate. These officers live and eat in the cabin, and are, of course, under the orders of their immediate seniors in rank. Apart from standing their regular watches, each has his particular work in the sailing and management of the ship, though the third mate has not the responsibility of the second. He is, in fact, not officially recognized as a responsible officer at all, and on many ships he ranks but a degree higher than the boatswain.

If the simile can be used the bosun is the foreman on board ship. He takes his orders from the officers and passes them on to the men. In some ways he is the most interesting character on board. He must have power to command men, he must be a Jack of all trades, besides being a first-class sailor. He is the right-hand man of the mates, and the ambassador between the officers and the crew. He is something of a doctor, too, for he must look after the ship's health, keeping it in repair. He must have an eye on everything aloft, spars and rigging, and if a rope is frayed or rotten he must see that it is replaced, for on a sound ratline [1] or a gasket [2] a sailor's life often depends. In the Navy he is a far more important person than in the merchant service, though in the picturesque days of sail he was a romantic figure in both marines. He was, and is still, in our imagination, the romantic ideal of the jolly Jack Tar. We picture him with a tattooed chest and arms, a brawny figure with a whistle, who can lead in chanties and dance the hornpipe. Well, why not? These things were once accepted as part of a sailor's accomplishments.

Next below the bosun is the carpenter, a person who was indispensable on a wooden ship. He was a genius with tools. He must be able to make anything in wood.

[1] Foot-rope on the shrouds—*i.e.*, rope-ladder.

[2] Short ropes for binding a sail to the yard.

He could shape a beautifully tapered spar out of a pine log, make hardwood blocks and deadeyes, or build a ship's boat. He must also be something of a blacksmith, for even on wooden ships there was a great deal of ironwork to keep in working order. He could use an adze on a fifty-foot mast or a penknife to carve out a tiny model of his own ship. He owed fealty to no man but the captain. He was a "cat that walked by himself," knowing his duties, and seldom receiving orders from the officers. Like the bosun, he must be able to go aloft, for a mast or a yard that is sprung needs instant attention, lest it takes half the watch overboard in the next puff of wind. The cleverest carpenters were probably those on whaling-ships, for they were expected to make whole the crushed wreck of a boat after a sperm whale had vented his fury on it —and they did.

THE JOLLY JACK TAR OF ROMANCE

On a 2000-ton full-rigged ship, with over thirty large sails, a very necessary member of the crew was the sailmaker. Like the carpenter and the cook, he was one of the 'idlers,' because he stood no watch, but worked all day and slept (we hope) all night. On some ships the sailmaker's job was no sinecure. The clipper *Flying Cloud*, which made record passages to San Francisco during the gold rush in the eighteen-fifties, was a demon for using up canvas. Her Captain Creesy would crack on his flying kites when more prudent skippers would have nothing set above the topsails.[1] Indeed, all clipper ships

[1] The *Flying Cloud* carried single topsails.

kept their sailmakers constantly stitching, for the clipper captains carried as much sail as their ships could stand. Which recalls the interesting fact that a ship's best, newest, and therefore strongest suit of sails was not 'bent'[1] in the summer-time or during a fine-weather voyage. In the summer, when the yachts in the Solent came out in their clouds of snowy-white canvas, the clipper ship wore her oldest suit, the patched and thin grey canvas that had in its younger days brought the ship through many a perilous time when had they split or blown away sure disaster would have followed.

The cook is plainly a man of some importance, if not distinction, on board any ship; for if it is true that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, then where could it be more true than among a crowd of men who have little to live for but eating and sleeping? His importance in the hierarchy of the ship is obvious, but he does not cut the romantic figure we should like to picture as his own. This worthy too often deserved the opprobrious title of 'Old Slush,' given him by the long-suffering crew. As on shore, there were at sea cooks both good and bad, but the fact is indisputable that when a ship's company was signed on the office of cook—a most important one, we should think—was not taken as seriously by the captain as it should have been. Too often after a ship was at sea the cook was discovered to have but few

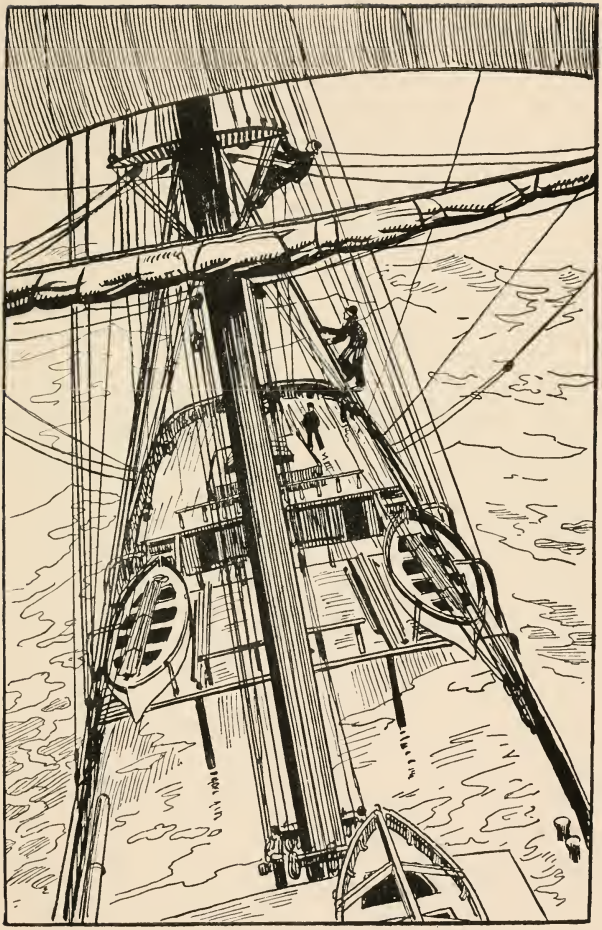
[1] *I.e.*, fastened on.

credentials for his job. Probably more discontent has been caused among the crowd 'forrard' through the despot of the galley than through all the man-driving officers that ever went to sea. How often have we read of mutiny that started over trouble through the vile food served to the crew! The cook, it is true, had poor enough material to work with, but there was no reason, except that of sheer incompetency, why he should make bad food worse. It gives us no pleasure to libel the fraternity of ships' cooks, but the truth is that, though there were some good men in the galley, there were more bad ones—bad in the sense of being incompetent and dirty. The attitude on a ship seemed to be that strong men could eat anything, and this statement is borne out by anyone who has sailed before the mast.

On a windjammer of any size at all there had to be a steward, some one to take in the officers' meals and look after the cabin. This factotum's importance depended largely on the size of the ship. On small vessels a steward is dispensed with altogether, and the greasy fellow that fills the post of cook also acts as steward, carrying the unpalatable messes he concocts from his caboose [1] along the deck to the cabin aft. These remarks apply to stewards on the ordinary freight-carrying sailing-ships. In the days when square-riggers took passengers the steward was a man of great importance, for his duties and responsibilities were many, and he was not a waiter in any sense of the word. He was not only storekeeper and head of the dining-room, but he was also something of a mother to the passengers, who would go to him with their petty complaints and wants.

Sailing-ships (I speak of the clipper-ship days) carried boys, known as apprentices, who aspired in time to become officers. They came from middle-class families who paid

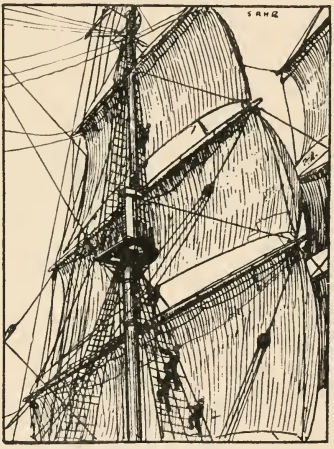
[1] The galley is known as the caboose on small vessels such as coasters.



a premium for their sons to enter a life that was far more rigorous than either son or parent had ever imagined it could be. Without wishing to paint a too lurid picture, it would nevertheless be idle to deny that when a boy went to sea he was pitched into a life that provided opportunities for seeing the harsher side of existence to an extent impossible on shore. But if he came through the ordeal uncontaminated his parents had no need to be ashamed of him. The life either turned a boy into a swine or a man.

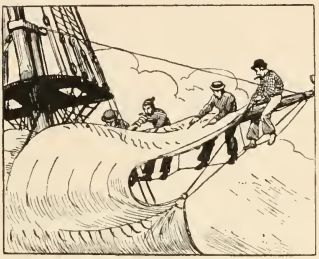
Sailors are used to obeying orders that to a landsman would seem preposterous—even impossible to carry out. Picture the scene on a windjammer during a heavy gale at night. Imagine our ship is fighting her way round the dreaded Horn in the depth of winter. The mate stands by the mizen weather rigging on the poop, the wet deck at a dangerously steep angle as the ship lies almost on her beam-ends. Only the poop and fo'c'sle show above the white cauldron of water. The waist of the ship is submerged under the seas that continually break aboard. Out of the darkness comes driving snow and sleet, and the watch, with deep-sea lashings on their glistening oilskins, stand by, half frozen with cold but keeping a watchful eye to windward. The gale has increased in fury, and the mate looks anxiously aloft and decides that more sail must come off the ship to ease her. He is a hard-case officer with a reputation for 'carrying on,' but he has held on almost too long. He shouts the order to get the upper topsails off her at once. His blasphemous voice is carried away on the wind, the order is heard, and the sails are clewed up. "Now up and stow them," he shouts. Into the weather rigging the watch claw their way aloft, beaten flat against the ratlines by the wind; up over the futtock rigging on to the top, up the top-mast rigging, and out on to the upper topsail yards, some men climbing on to the

weather yardarm, sticking up steeply into the blackness; others sliding down the foot-ropes of the lee yardarm, which is almost dipping into the hissing water below. They stand on the swinging ropes, hanging on with one hand, while with the other they claw with half-frozen fingers at the pounding, slatting belly of the sail. The rounded surface of the canvas, full of wind like a bag and as tight as a drum-skin, presents a problem to Sailor Jack's free hand that a landsman would say was impossible to overcome. But the sail must be furled, though it seems made of sheet iron and is imbued with the devil. It tries to hurl the men off the yard; they reach forward and grasp the reef points, and pass the gaskets, after almost breaking their hearts to do it. The wind gets into the sail and tears it away from their benumbed fingers, and though it takes an hour's battling, the canvas is furled, and not until that is done may the half-dead men crawl off the yard and down the shrouds to the deck. Perhaps their watch is done: if so they may go below to their sodden bunks, unless all hands are needed on deck. Or if their watch is not finished they may have to go aloft again to take in what remains of a topsail. They have done a man's work, and in a stage drama, I suppose, they would be told gruffly (but kindly) to go below and splice the mainbrace with a tot of rum; but in real life they may be



cursed for a pack of 'sojers' for being so sanguinary slow. A week's gale off the Horn could be the quintessence of physical discomfort, what with wet bunks, wet clothes, and nothing hot to eat or drink, as the cook and his pans were probably floating about in the galley.

If this is what happens to any 2000-ton sailing-ship in a gale, what must Drake have endured when he rounded the Horn in the cranky, top-heavy little *Golden Hind*? The sea has no mercy for weakness. It either brutalizes men or makes heroes of them, but it never softens them, for it does not leave a sailor in peace for long. In the days of sail anything was likely to happen. An inoffensive little ship would slip out of some quiet harbour, and ere she returned might figure in a drama of the sea that would echo round the world. When the *Bounty* set out with a party of naturalists to transplant breadfruit-trees from the South Sea Islands to the West Indies, no one dreamed that this insignificant transport would become immortal through one of the most extraordinary mutinies and the longest boat journeys on record. And certainly the company of the *Grosvenor*, when she sailed from India for England in 1782, did not suspect that they would nearly all perish among the savage blacks in South Africa after most appalling hardships.



LIVING DANGEROUSLY

It stands to reason that a seafaring life in the days of sail was more pregnant with danger than it is in these days of fast steamers and quick voyages. And to live dangerously is to grow contemptuous of danger. Especially was this true on old-time men-of-war, where to the ordinary

risks of the sea was added the spice of battle. Fighting in Nelson's time was a more personal matter than it is to-day, when ships bombard each other from opposite horizons.

At Trafalgar the decks of many of the ships were like abattoirs. Anæsthetics and antiseptic surgery were unknown. An amputation case was made drunk on rum; then the limb was crudely sawn off and the stump afterward dipped in hot tar! Brutal, horrible? Yes, but Nelson himself went through it. And, long before Trafalgar, Sir Richard Grenville set an example of undying courage that has never been forgotten.

A PACKET-RAT

No wonder the uncultured sailor was apt to have a poor opinion of landsmen. When the cottager got into his snug bed he usually slept secure; but the sailor, even in the best of times, could not lie all night through undisturbed, for must not he turn out in the middle of the night to stand his watch? And in a gale, when all hands were needed on deck, he frequently lost a whole night's sleep and then went below at dawn in sodden clothes to a sodden hammock. The life was only for the strong. Sailors went barefoot most of the time, and even when they put on shoes they never wore stockings. The notorious Atlantic packet-rats of the fifties and sixties of the last century scorned to wear a jacket when aloft, no matter how keen the wind. Their chequered shirts were opened wide at the neck, showing an expanse of tattooed chest. Up their muscular arms ran indigo and pink serpents, flags, anchors, mermaids, and frequently some obscene design.

While we are accustomed to thinking of the sailor wearing a distinctive costume, a costume which plainly

indicates his calling, it has not always been so. Up to the time of Elizabeth sailors wore the same clothes as landsmen. But it was not until the Restoration that naval uniforms began definitely to appear. In a naval document dated 1675 there is mention of grey jackets, striped waistcoats, and red breeches for seamen, and in an order for clothing dated 1706 there are mentioned grey kersey jackets with red cotton linings, fifteen brass buttons, and button-holes stitched with gold thread, blue and white chequered shirts, grey woollen stockings, round-toed shoes with brass buckles, and leather caps.

SEAMAN, 1770

In the middle of the eighteenth century the seaman's dress was a small, low cocked hat, a pea-jacket, petticoat trousers (the short wide breeches resembling a kilt), and buckled shoes. The hair was allowed to grow long, but was not queued until a later date.

This was the ordinary seaman. The officers had something approaching a distinctive uniform also. Gold-braided three-cornered cocked hats were *de rigueur*, and blue seems to have been the accepted colour for coats. These had white facings and cuffs with brass buttons. Underneath was a long white waistcoat. Knee-breeches of white, with white stockings and buckle shoes, were worn. Toward the end of the eighteenth century a definite uniformity in officers' and seamen's costumes was established, and to describe them all would require a thick volume. Epaulets arrived about 1780, and indicated rank.

During battle an officer's uniform made him conspicuous to sharpshooters in the adversary's tops, yet it was never the practice for officers to disguise themselves or take

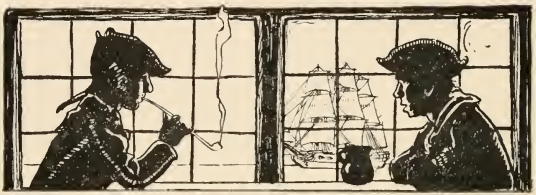
shelter. In fact, they considered it a point of honour to put on their best clothes previous to a battle, and during the engagement defiantly paced their own quarterdecks, a conspicuous target for enemy muskets. A foolish and wasteful practice! Many a valuable officer was lost this way, and Nelson himself was killed through the same cause.

The *Victory* was hooked alongside the *Redoutable*, the two ships pouring a withering fire into each other. On the quarterdeck of the English ship there was a clear space between the guns, about twenty-one feet long and extending from the companion-ladder combings forward to the wheel aft, where Nelson and Captain Hardy paced back and forth during the battle. Nelson was wearing his old admiral's coat with its four conspicuous stars, and he must have been deliberately picked out by a marine in the *Redoutable's* mizen-top. It was about twenty-five minutes past one, when the Admiral and Hardy were still pacing the narrow walk between the guns, that the latter suddenly saw his companion face about and fall to the deck on his knees. A musket-ball had glanced off his epaulet, entered his left shoulder, and descending diagonally had lodged in his spine. As they carried him below he took out his handkerchief to cover his stars and his face that he might not be recognized by the crew. His death was splendid. He had everything to live for. He was the idol of the people and the Navy, his value to the country was immeasurable. But he literally threw his life away for the sake of his ideals of manly deportment.

Nelson's uniform as an admiral invited the fire of the enemy, but so, too, did the uniforms of all officers, just as the bright plumage of a bird attracts the hunter. The crews wore more sober colours. Among the men cocked hats went out of use about 1780, and their place was taken by woollen or fur caps, and afterward by the familiar shiny black tarpaulin hat, shaped something like a modern

straw hat. Nelson's seamen wore a short blue jacket, with brass buttons and strips of canvas sewn along the seams, and white duck or striped trousers. The shirt was chequered, and the headgear was the tarpaulin hat described above. It was this hat that brought him the name of 'tar.'

The greased pigtail had now become the fashion, and it endured till about 1825. In spite of all this, it was not until as late as 1860 that complete uniformity in naval costume was attained. Knee-breeches were supplanted by



long trousers in 1830, though warrant officers had made the change some years earlier.

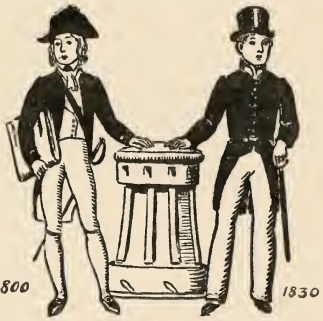
The merchant seamen's costume of this period was not unlike that of their brothers of the Navy, except, of course, that it was less elaborate and bore no badges of rank.

The sailor's picturesque costume disappeared along with the old square-rigged ship, unless we except the gold-braided splendour of the full-dress uniform of the modern naval officer. He still bears traces of the Nelson dress, the cocked hat (now worn fore-and-aft), the epaulets, the sword, the badges, and much of the gold braid.

Ever since the Navy took to having a distinctive uniform its sailors have outshone the merchantmen in sartorial bravery. And it remains so to this day. Those who are so fortunate as to have seen a windjammer at sea may have noticed a figure pacing the poop and wearing ordinary clothes, a muffler, and a bowler hat or perhaps a cap. That prosaic figure was the captain or the first mate! And

if you saw any men aloft or about the decks, you would remark their nondescript and unseamanlike appearance.

Apart from the traditional boy's dreams of running away to sea, the seafaring life has never really been a popular one. The press-gang and, later, the custom of shanghai-ing seamen testify to that. Old sailors would say that only the fool of the family went to sea, and that "those who go to sea for pleasure would go to hell for pastime." However romantic the life is to read about from the security of an arm-chair, we are bound to admit that old sailors had reason for their cynical pronouncement. Still, while for humanitarian reasons we may be glad those brutal days are over, we recognize their vitalizing influence on the race.



MIDSHIPMEN

It was the harsh conditions of life on board ship that inspired Captain Marryat and Richard Henry Dana to give us contributions to literature that we would have been poorer without. Several of Marryat's books are propaganda to call attention to the hard lot of seamen and the injustice they suffered. His *Frank Mildmay* and *The King's Own* are pieces of downright propaganda, and are supposed to have been the direct cause of the amelioration of lower-deck hardships. In 1834 a young Harvard student left college because of eye-trouble, and went for a voyage around the Horn in a sailing-ship, in the hope that the long rest from study and the outdoor life would effectually cure his eye weakness. He sailed from Boston in the brig *Pilgrim* in August 1834, and returned home in the ship

Alert in September 1836 entirely cured, and his mind stored with the memories of a tremendous experience. He had rounded the Horn twice, had been to the then almost unknown country of California, and had lived the hard life of a foremast hand for two years. He returned to college to finish his studies, and while there wrote, from notes made on the spot, his book *Two Years before the Mast*, an immortal work that is justly ranked among the greatest sea-pieces in our language. This is not the place to dwell on Dana's unconscious genius, but to speak of how the book was inspired by his commiseration for the wretched lives of his shipmates and a desire to call public attention to the abuse of authority by many officers of American ships. On the first day at sea Captain Thompson, of the *Pilgrim*, harangued his crew while he puffed at a cigar between sentences.

" Now, my men, we have begun a long voyage. If we get along well together, we shall have a comfortable time; if we don't, we shall have a hell afloat. All you have to do is to obey your orders and do your duty like men—then you will fare well enough; if you don't, you will fare hard enough, I can tell you. If we pull together, you will find me a clever fellow; if we don't, you will find me a bloody rascal. That's all I've got to say. Go below, the larboard watch!"

The men did their duty, but Captain Thompson did not keep faith. He proved to be a martinet of the worst sort, and abused his powers until the men were nigh driven to mutiny.[1] Then there was the notorious Bully Waterman, captain of the clippers *Sea Witch* and *Challenge*, whose reputation for quarterdeck tyranny earned him an evil name in every seaport from New York to San Francisco. His ill-fame as a man-driver became so well known that he had great difficulty in getting crews to sign on with him. It must be admitted that the material ships' captains had to work with was often of the worst kind,

[1] See pp. 128–131.

and only a strong man could get such hard-bitten crews to obey him, but whether the harshness of the officers brutalized the crews or whether the crews made the officers into devils it is hard to say. The probability is that the two camps worked against each other, and, the officers having the law behind them and the men having no redress, it was inevitable some should abuse their authority. Bully Waterman seems to have been a devil at sea, but he redeemed himself with his owners by making record passages.

The Atlantic packet-rats, the Bloody Forty, Yankee hell ships, blue-nosers, bucko mates, and all the sordid tales of man-driving and man-killing do not mean that life afloat did not have its lighter and pleasanter side. When the "fool of the family" ran away to sea he had romantic visions of foreign lands, palmy beaches in the South Seas, pearls, coral, brightly coloured parrots, and riches from prize-money. Captain Cook was such a boy. He dreamed of fame and achievement, and found it at sea. Marco Polo, Columbus, Cabot, Cartier, Magellan, and Da Gama were among the company of "divine fools" who found their happiness afloat.

Such is the magic attraction of the sea that, once a sailor got over the first nostalgia for the land, he remained a sailor for the rest of his life. Once a sailor always a sailor. There is an Elizabethan ballad which puts the case for the youth who would go to sea:

> To pass the seas some think a toil,
> Some think it strange abroad to roam;
> Some think it grief to leave their soil,
> Their parents, kinfolk, and their home.
> Think so who list, I like it not;
> I must abroad to try my lot.

And another verse at a later date says:

On burning coasts, or frozen seas,
Alike in each extreme;
The gallant sailor's e'er at ease,
And floats with fortune's stream.[1]

The pay at sea was negligible, but the chances of prize-money were considerable, especially to those who served in privateers or naval frigates. For the frigates were fast cruisers, ideal for a chase, whereas the line-of-battle ships so often did blockade duty, perhaps remaining just outside an enemy port for months at a time. The sailor always preferred enlisting where there was a likelihood of action. His might be a short life, but he took care it was a gay one, or at the worst a carefree one. His happy-go-lucky nature was expressed in the eighteenth-century verse:

How happy is the sailor's life,
From coast to coast to roam;
In every port he finds a wife,
In every land a home.

Skippers in merchantmen often take their wives to sea. So did officers in the Navy a hundred years ago, though Nelson and Collingwood frowned on the custom. It seems unfair that the men could not have the same privilege, but obviously that would be impossible. It would not do to have the fo'c'sle full of women. Where would discipline go to? What would happen during a heavy gale or a fierce engagement with an enemy ship is too unpleasant to contemplate. There have been female stowaways and female pirates, such as Anne Bonny and Mary Read; but these half-masculine creatures are rare, and the fact remains that the fo'c'sle of any ship is the last place in the world for a woman to enter. Should the figure of a woman

[1] *The British Tar in Fact and Fiction*, by Commander Charles N. Robinson, R.N.

darken the doorway to the average fo'c'sle what a hush would fall upon the company! Half-naked men would strive to cover themselves, oaths would remain unspoken, and all the free and easy animalism of a purely masculine world would suddenly turn self-conscious.

No wonder the practice of taking women on board was stopped! Ships which were manned by impressment, and frequently by prison sweepings, called the K.H.B.'s, or king's hard bargains, were no place for even the coarsest women. Yet the lower decks were crowded with women when ships were in port. The sentimental engravings and coloured prints of the day showed buxom Saucy Sues languishing in the muscular arms of Jolly Jacks, while all around, on the decks or on gun-carriages or powder-boxes, lolled amorous couples in attitudes of abandon. It was inimical to discipline, and without stern discipline a ship would be ungovernable. A sea-captain must command respect, for there are no police to whistle for if he needs assistance on the high seas. When all is said and done there seems no substitute for discipline, and with all their faults the martinets of the old days of sail were prime seamen and entirely to be trusted in a tight place.

CHAPTER XI

Lost Ships and Lost Treasure

WHEN a ship is rolling down to her scuppers in a heavy gale her passengers grow nervous and begin to regret their past sins, but when the same ship is groping her way slowly through a thick fog the passengers go to bed and sleep soundly. Yet, paradoxically enough, the greatest peril at sea is fog. It has been the cause of more disasters than all the storms that ever blew. Collisions with icebergs, derelicts, and other ships and running ashore usually happen during a fog; yet such is human nature that most sea-travellers would rather go through this peril than through a gale, even though ten ships are lost in a fog to one in a storm. The greatest of all marine calamities, the loss of the *Titanic*, was due to this sinister enemy.

When fog descends on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland in the spring all shipping in the steamer track slows down and gropes blindly forward, the officers anxious and alert, keeping a look-out for an imaginary vessel or berg that any moment may become a real one. The siren, which sounds every sixty seconds, is of little practical use. It will not drive away a berg that may be directly ahead, and its sound does not carry far in the fog. And if the navigator escapes other ships or icebergs there are derelicts floating in the ocean lanes which are a constant menace to navigation. Indeed, so seriously is this peril taken by

mariners that the United States Government keeps a vessel in commission for the single purpose of hunting down and sinking derelicts. The United States Hydrographic Office gets daily reports of floating wreckage—reports reading something like this: "July 6, Lat. 40° 22′, Long. 49° 36′, passed a large piece of a wreck floating awash. S.S. *Oceanic*." Other vessels may have seen and reported it miles from this spot, and it is the business of the derelict

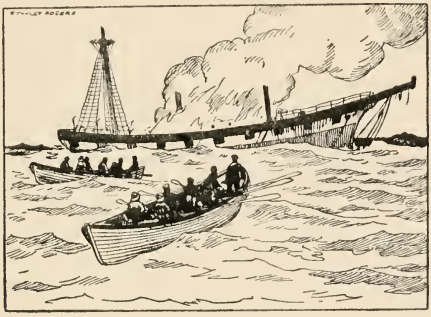
destroyer to cruise about where the wreck is likely to be, and, by some means or other, remove the menace. A large piece of wreckage, or even an entire vessel floating awash, is difficult to see in the daytime and impossible to detect at night or in a fog. When a piece of wreckage or a derelict large enough to be a danger to shipping is seen in the ocean steamer lanes the destroyer goes with all speed to the spot where the wreck was last reported, and from there steams in widening circles or in zigzags until the quarry is sighted. An examination will show how she may best be destroyed, or if the hull is sound the derelict is taken in tow to the nearest port.

The methods of sinking a waterlogged wreck vary according to the type of vessel and the cargo. Some

cargoes, such as timber, will keep a wreck afloat, and boring holes in her hull would obviously be useless. Most derelicts are destroyed by a charge or two of guncotton placed where it will have the most effect. The charge is then fired electrically, through insulated wires and the ordinary detonating machine, from a small boat at a distance. When the derelict of the single-screw, 3500-ton steamer *Dunmore* was drifting about in the North Atlantic the British Government sent several cruisers to find and sink her. The *Dunmore* left Cardiff on December 20, 1905, with 3000 tons of Welsh coal for Newport News, Virginia. In a heavy gale she lost her propeller, becoming unmanageable, and got so badly pounded by the seas that she started to settle. Thinking she had but a few more hours to float, the crew took to the boats when the ship was six hundred miles off Cape Cod. The men in time reached the American coast at Baltimore. The *Dunmore* was given up for lost, as steel ships seldom float for long after they become waterlogged. However, in the following March the liner *St Louis* brought a strange story to New York. It seemed that at midnight on March 14 the look-out saw a steamer ahead behaving queerly, as if she had lost her rudder. The *St Louis* approached and hailed the strange vessel. It was a clear, moonlight night, and the details of the derelict stood out distinctly. She had a heavy list, her sides were red with rust, her upper works were damaged, and her funnel had gone. Approaching closer, those on the *St Louis* could hear the hordes of rats running and squealing over the derelict. On careful examination this proved to be the *Dunmore*, which was supposed to have

foundered. A ship was chartered to search the Atlantic for her and remove such a menace to shipping, but after a long cruise gave up the search. Other ships reported seeing her, and one even broke several hawsers trying to tow her to port. Then the *Dunmore* disappeared for ever.

Another derelict which caused much anxiety was the *Alma Cummings*, which was abandoned by her crew after



THE "ALMA CUMMINGS"

she had been dismasted in a blizzard off Cape May in February 1896. For days the crew had stuck to the derelict, enduring terrible hardships, since they were constantly wet and had neither fire nor food. When it was decided to abandon the ship the captain, knowing she was a menace to shipping, looked about for some means of sinking her, and thereby showed more consideration for other shipmasters than is sometimes shown. But how to destroy this wooden vessel? The only means likely to succeed was to set her on fire, though, since there were no matches, this seemed at first impossible. Then an inventive brain suggested firing a rifle into a tin of paraffin, of which there was plenty on board. This was done, and

when the crew sailed away in the boats the *Alma Cummings* was on fire fore and aft. The captain had done his duty, and a danger to shipping would soon sink to the bottom of the sea.

But it was not to be. A month or two later the derelict was reported afloat near the English coast, her upper works charred by fire, but her water-soaked cargo untouched by the flames. The wreck was subsequently seen in the Bay of Biscay and then near the Azores, drifting back across the Atlantic on an erratic course, until finally she piled up on the Panama coast, where the breakers soon pounded her to pieces.

It can be seen how deadly these low-floating wrecks can be when fog settles over the water. The thin plating of a modern steamer is no proof against damage in even a gentle collision. A glancing blow at a derelict, or on one of those small bergs known as 'growlers,' is sufficient to rip the plating off a steel ship, and anything in the way of a head-on collision, even at the low speed of a few knots, will make a concertina of the sharp bows of the ship.

The 7000-ton French liner *La Bourgogne* was sliced open in a fog on the Grand Banks in a collision with the sailing-ship *Cromartyshire*, and sank in a few minutes. The windjammer herself was badly damaged, losing her bows and entire fore-mast, though she kept afloat long enough to reach Halifax.

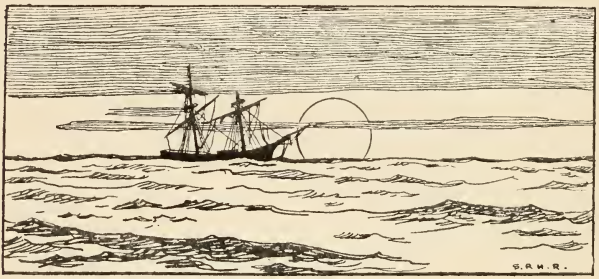
The captain of *La Bourgogne* is said to have been steaming at a prohibitive speed through the fog, and if so he was guilty of criminal folly. Somewhere ahead in the fog the *Cromartyshire* was converging toward the fatal spot, but her speed was barely more than a drift, for she needed a wind, and wind and fog are not often found together. Then came the sudden shock of the collision, and what a moment before had been a fine ship now lay on the water a crippled wreck, her bows and bowsprit cut off and her fore-mast

hanging overside in a tangle of cordage. The crew at once prepared to abandon ship, but when it was found that the bulkheads were keeping out the water the captain decided to try to reach Halifax. And what of the liner? She had drifted off in the fog, and those on the windjammer heard her siren give several sharp blasts, which they took

to be a signal that she was coming to their assistance. For a few minutes nothing could be seen, and then as the men on the *Cromartyshire* strained to look for the steamer they were suddenly aghast to see hundreds of people floating in the water. The French vessel had been ripped open amidships by the bows of the little windjammer, and the sea rushed in the gaping hole in such a volume that within a few minutes after the collision *La Bourgogne* had gone to the bottom. The astonished crew of the *Cromartyshire* saved two hundred of the liner's five hundred people,

and then began a slow progress toward the land. A few hours later, however, one of the Allan liners hove in sight and took the *Cromartyshire* in tow, and successfully brought her to Halifax after taking off the two hundred survivors.

Had the *Cromartyshire* filled as rapidly as *La Bourgogne*, the world would have been puzzled by a remarkable mystery of the sea—two ships sunk without leaving a trace; *Spurlos versenkt*, as the Germans would say. There are many unsolved mysteries of the sea, and it must occur



to us that the cause of the mystery of at least half the lost ships can be laid to fog. You get both icebergs and fog together in the North Atlantic steamer track, and it is significant that most of the missing ships are lost in the North Atlantic. The list is astounding in its length alone. We may have heard of the 16,000-ton steamship *Waratah*, which disappeared between Durban and Cape Town in July 1909 and was never seen again; or of the s.s. *President*, which was swallowed up in the Atlantic in 1841, with its company of 120 people, and provided a first-class mystery that has never been solved. But these two well-known instances are but a fraction of the list of ships that have disappeared as completely as if they had melted into thin air. There was the s.s. *City of Glasgow*, which left Liver-

pool on March 1, 1854, with 480 people on board. From that day to this nothing has ever been heard of her. The *City of Glasgow's* sister ship, the *City of Manchester*, sailed from Philadelphia the same day that the doomed ship left Liverpool, and on her arrival in the Mersey reported vast numbers of icebergs in the steamer track. Other ships brought in similar tales of enormous bergs, and the people on the ship *Westmorland* swore that they had seen an ice continent nearly 400 miles long! In the word 'ice' seems to lie the answer to the *City of Glasgow* riddle.

THE "CITY OF BOSTON"

In the same year (May 1854) the *Lady Nugent* left Madras for Rangoon with 400 soldiers and a number of passengers on board, and vanished for ever from men's eyes. In January 1856 the wooden steamer *Pacific*, of the Collins Line, with 180 people on board, disappeared in a passage between Liverpool and New York. Nothing belonging to her has ever been found. So it was with the *City of Boston*, of the Inman Line. She left Halifax for Liverpool with 177 passengers and crew on January 28, 1870, and vanished. Ocean travel was slower in those days, and it was not until a month had passed that hope of ever seeing her again was abandoned. In February 1893 the White Star freighter *Naronic* disappeared into the blue after leaving Liverpool with seventy people on board. Admittedly one of her lifeboats, badly damaged, was found adrift off the Azores, but there was nothing in it to explain how the *Naronic* had disappeared.

There was the extraordinary disappearance of the Allan liner *Huronian* in the Atlantic in February 1902—but the list has grown long enough.

Between the years 1840 and 1890 on the Atlantic alone twenty-four ships disappeared without leaving a single survivor or any clue whatever as to the cause of their loss! These ships were not spirited away; they foundered, and the likeliest explanation is simply fog and ice. Collision with another ship would bring the mystery to light, for in such a case one of the vessels usually keeps afloat long enough to bring the news to land, or even if both sank together the remarkable coincidence of two ships disappearing at the same time would point to the solution.

The sea is rich in mystery, from sea-serpents to lost ships, and the superstitious nature of the sailor causes a yarn to lose nothing in the telling. He will add mystery where there is none. He will see romantic and occult explanations in perfectly natural phenomena, such as the faint glow of light on the yardarms during an electrical storm, or the phosphorescence in the sea. But he cannot add mystery to the *Mary Celeste* or the *Waratah*. They are mystery enough in themselves.

A tragic episode of the sea[1] came to light forty-odd years ago when some boys, playing on the beach near Fremantle, Australia, found a message written by some castaways on a distant isle. A large bird had fluttered on to the water and appeared to be choking to death. The youths waded into the surf and carried the bird, which was an albatross, to the shore, where it died within a few minutes. Investigation disclosed the cause of the bird's death. A tin band round its neck had caused it to suffocate when it attempted to swallow a fish. This strip of metal, which was taken from a preserved-meat tin, had

[1] Told by J. G. Lockhart in *Strange Adventures of the Sea* (Philip Allan).

on it a message punched with some sharp instrument. The words were in French, and read, "Treize naufragés sont refugiés sur les Isles Crozets. Au secours pour l'amour de Dieu."[1] The date on the tin showed that the message had been sent less than two weeks before. The Crozets are the bleak isles belonging to France in the Southern Indian Ocean not far from the Antarctic Circle. This is where the ship *Strathmore* was wrecked in the seventies, and where the survivors existed for over seven months, until rescued by a passing whaler. The message found by the boys might not have been a genuine one, but until it was proven fraudulent the dictates of common humanity demanded that a ship should be dispatched at once to the Crozets. Nevertheless, the wheels of officialdom moved so slowly that it was several weeks before a vessel reached the Crozets. On arrival there a careful search was made for the castaways, and though no one was found, another message was discovered. It was written in French and said the refugees were about to sail on a raft to another island in search of food. No trace of them was ever discovered.

The desperate position of these thirteen castaways stranded on a remote island brings to mind that other drama which might have ended in a similar mystery and tragedy. I refer to the experience of the men of the *Endurance* who were stranded on Elephant Island in the Antarctic, their lives depending on a single thread, and that thread the success or failure of Shackleton's magnificent boat journey. While twenty-two men, ragged, ill, and half starved, lived under two upturned boats in one of the remotest spots on earth, an ice-covered rock where no vegetation could live, Shackleton and his five companions in the tiny boat set forth to cross 600 miles of the stormiest

[1] "Thirteen castaways have taken refuge on the Crozet Isles. Help, for the love of God!"

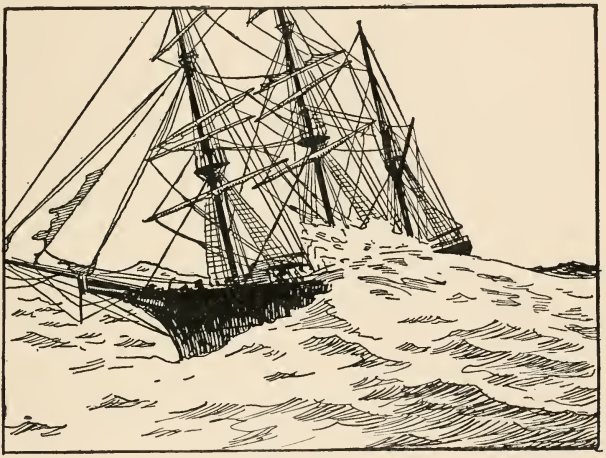
seas in the world in search of help. That they won through the world knows, but few know how near to perishing was the rescue party, or how, when a rescue ship finally did get to Elephant Island, it came only just in time before the Antarctic night closed down over the twenty-two men. After several efforts the rescue ship succeeded in getting through to the castaways, but only by the narrowest margin did it escape being crushed in the ice. Had Shackleton and his five companions perished, the members of the expedition might have all figured in another mystery of the sea as tragic as that of Franklin's.

Messages purporting to be from shipwrecked people or from sinking ships are not uncommon, for the thing lends itself to fraud. Such a message, in a corked bottle, was picked up after Miss Mackay and Captain Hinchliffe were lost while flying the Atlantic. Every bit of evidence pointed to its not being genuine. Another case was the message found in a bottle after the disappearance of the s.s. *President*, already referred to. The message, written on paper and in a sealed bottle, purported to come from Tyrone Power, a famous actor of the day, who was on the steamer. It read, "The *President* is sinking. God help us all. Tyrone Power," but few people accepted it as authentic. On the other hand, the message picked up by a bather on the shore of the Barbados in the West Indies many months after the famous *Kent* disaster was entirely genuine, for the writer, Major Sir Duncan Macgregor, was one of the survivors, and recognized the message as the one he had dropped overboard when he knew that the ship was doomed.[1]

Another message—sent not in a bottle, but on a piece of wood—which was genuine enough was that from a

[1] The message was, "The ship *Kent*, Indiaman, is on fire. Elizabeth, Joanna, and myself commit our spirits into the hands of our blessed Redeemer, Whose grace enables us to be quite composed in the awful prospect of entering Eternity."

young apprentice on the barque *Callerou*. In November 1891 the *Callerou*, a British vessel, left Hull for Port Elizabeth with a cargo of coal, and neither ship nor crew was ever seen again. A pilot was on board to take the *Callerou* through the North Sea, but he never returned home. Ordinarily he would have gone ashore at some



THE "CALLEROU"

port on the South Coast and returned by train, but the fact that he too disappeared suggests that the barque was lost in the North Sea. Two relics of the lost vessel were found—one a bucket bearing her name, which was washed ashore on Texel Island, Holland, two months after the disappearance, and the other a message written on a board which was picked up in the surf by a coastguard at Kilnsea, near Hull, in January 1893, nearly a year after the bucket was found.

Just before the barque had sailed on her last voyage a smart boy of fourteen, named George Dawson, had joined

her to serve for four years as an apprentice. Young Dawson had been attending the Trinity House Navigation School at Hull, and possessed a natural love of the sea which overrode all his mother's objections to his signing on with the *Callerou* before he had finished his studies ashore. So the young hopeful sailed in the fatal ship, and a few days later a great gale swept the North Sea, causing shipping to run for shelter.

The disappearance of the barque and her crew of seventeen men remained one of the secrets of the sea until the coastguard picked up the board with its poignant message. The words, written deeply into the wood in lead pencil, read, " Whoever picks this up shall know that the *Callerou* was run down by an unknown steamer." On the other side of the board was another message in the same handwriting which ran, " May the Lord comfort my mother! *Callerou* run down by an unknown steamer. Dawson. No more time; sinking." The coastguard sent a copy of the message to the Receiver of Wreck at Hull, and when the news came to Dawson's mother she went to Kilnsea, an out-of-the-way hamlet on the coast which was reached by train and then by road, to see if she could identify her son's writing. On seeing it she at once pronounced it the writing of her boy. The piece of board (it was about three feet long and about four inches wide) was taken to Hull, where it was submitted to the master of Dawson's school. The handwriting was carefully compared with that in the boy's old exercise-books, with the result that there was no question as to the genuineness of the message—one of the few washed up by the sea that have proved authentic. Such messages may, to the modern reader, savour of the dramatic, but that need not detract from their worth as evidence. Sailors are notoriously sentimental, and forty or more years ago every one expressed themselves in a style of speech that nowadays we consider

a trifle sentimental and somewhat ornate. "Au secours, pour l'amour de Dieu," sounds theatrical perhaps, but who would not be moved to write in a desperate vein if they were starving?

In the year 1853 the shipping world was stirred by the disappearance of the smart merchant frigate *Madagascar* on a passage between Australia and London. Many years afterward, when the *Madagascar* was almost forgotten, a woman in New Zealand, lying on her deathbed, professed to be a survivor of the lost ship, and sent for a clergyman to whom to relate the whole story.[1] First, however, let us briefly recount certain facts concerning the ship and her passengers which give the colour of truth to the dying woman's statement. The *Madagascar* sailed between Australia and England at the height of the Australian gold prosperity, and in July 1853, when she lay at Port Phillip ready to sail on what was to be her last voyage, she had 68,390 ounces of gold on board. The warps were about to be cast off when detectives from Melbourne came up the gang-plank and arrested two of the passengers on a charge of gold robbery. The two suspects were tried, and though a quantity of gold-dust was found in their trunks, nothing was proved against them. But the trial delayed the departure of the ship, and she sailed a month later than her scheduled time. That the *Madagascar* carried a large quantity of gold is known. It is also known that she carried among her full complement of passengers many 'hard-boiled' characters from the gold-diggings. When she became overdue and was finally given up for lost, stories got about of her having sailed with desperate characters on board who planned to take the ship and run away with the treasure.

[1] I am indebted to *The Blackwall Frigates*, by Basil Lubbock, for the facts.

Now here is the tale told by the dying woman. She said that she was a nurse on the *Madagascar* on its fatal voyage, and that, when in the South Atlantic, some of the passengers and the crew had joined in a mutiny, killing the captain and his officers. All the passengers who had not shared in the crime were locked below, with the exception of some young women, whose lives were spared. These latter were bundled into the boats along with the gold, and after setting fire to the ship the mutineers joined the frightened women and sailed away, leaving the prisoners to perish in the burning ship. But Nemesis pursued the wretches, for only one of the boats ever reached land, and this one capsized in the surf, losing the gold-dust overboard, when a landing was made on the coast of Brazil. The survivors were five women and six men, and on shore their sufferings were increased by their getting yellow fever in the first settlement they reached. Here all but three died. There remained of the original company of the *Madagascar* but these three people, two of them men, and the third the woman who related the story on her death-bed. The two men forced this woman to accompany them and to share their wretched lives until they at last abandoned her. She eventually found her way to New Zealand, where she ended her days. There is no reason why this account should not be true. It is certainly consistent with the reports in Melbourne of desperate characters having taken passage on the *Madagascar*.

Among sea-mysteries and tales of lost ships none are more diverting than those concerning lost treasure. The wrecks of the *Lutine*, the *Telemaque*, the Tobermory galleon, the *Thetis*, and a hundred others are as romantic actualities as anything fiction can provide. Somewhere at the bottom of a sea-cave on an island 400 miles south of New Zealand lies a fortune in gold-dust and nuggets in

the barnacle-encrusted hull of the *General Grant*,[1] and off Cape Vidal, Zululand, is the wreck of the notorious vessel *Dorothea*, sunk during the Boer War with £400,000 in gold bars on board while carrying on an illicit gold traffic from Delagoa Bay. Near by, on the coast of what was then known as Caffraria, in 1782 the unlucky Indiaman *Grosvenor* broke her back, and sank with something like £2,000,000 in treasure in her, among which were said to be the golden peacocks from the celebrated throne at Delhi. Many attempts have been made to get at the treasure, so far without success.

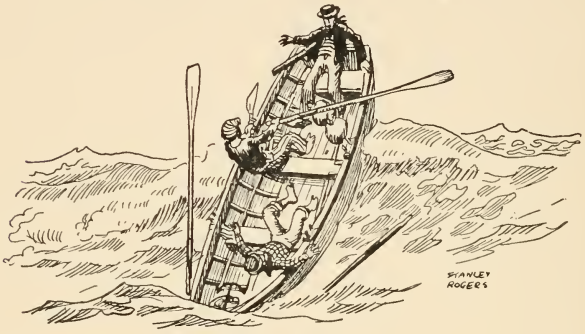
Though treasure-seekers are usually disappointed, it sometimes happens that these dreams of riches come true. In 1687 Captain William Phips, of Massachusetts, was cruising in the merchant ship *James and Mary* when he discovered, lying among the rocks on the banks of the Bahamas, at the northern side of Hispaniola, a Spanish plate ship which had been wrecked there forty-four years previously. Captain Phips and his men got busy and recovered most of the treasure, which was in gold and silver bullion to the total value of £300,000 sterling, and weighed thirty-two tons. Nothing succeeds like success, and shortly afterward this fortunate man was knighted by King James II.

A treasure less honestly come by is one of 20,000 dollars in silver coin, a pirate's share of a larger haul, which lies buried somewhere on the beach near Southampton, Long Island, U.S.A. Charles Gibbs was born in Rhode Island, and served in the *Chesapeake* against the *Shannon* in the famous duel. When the American ship was taken, Gibbs, along with his compatriots, was made prisoner of war and languished in Dartmoor until the war was over. Back at sea again, he entered a career of piracy, and for many years escaped the gallows, until he was at last arrested after

[1] See pp. 233–240.

murdering the captain of the brig *Vineyard* for the sake of the treasure on board her.

Having squandered the proceeds of many piratical robberies and being without a ship and down on his luck, he signed on as an able seaman in the *Vineyard*, which was about to sail from New Orleans to Philadelphia with a cargo of molasses and cotton and 54,000 dollars in specie. After they had been several days out Gibbs learned of the



"CAPSIZED IN THE SURF"

treasure on board, and cold-bloodedly decided to kill the captain and the mate and take command himself, a plan not so impossible on a small brig as it might well have been on a larger vessel. He took into his confidence two men who agreed to help him, and, the plan being decided upon, the three waited their opportunity, which came a few nights later. Captain Thornby was struck on the head with a pump-handle and at once thrown overboard. As the mate came up on deck he was treated in the same way, and Gibbs and the other two men were now masters of the brig. By ferocious threats they intimidated the remaining seamen into joining them, with the promise of sharing the spoils. The vessel was thoroughly searched,

and the specie was found to be in three small barrels. As the brig approached Long Island Gibbs decided to set fire to her and take the money, which was sewn into canvas bags, and bury it on shore until the hue and cry died down. When fifteen miles off Southampton Light the brig was set on fire, and the crew put off in the two boats with the precious loot stowed between the thwarts. But the plans went wrong when one of the boats capsized in the surf, spilling its men and losing the treasure. Gibbs got ashore and buried 20,000 dollars of the money, but before he could return for it he was captured and hanged, and as no one else knew the exact spot where the money was buried it lies there still.

Sailors are fond of the old story of the cabin-boy who goes to the captain and asks if a thing is lost when you know where it is, and on receiving the fierce reply, " No, you fool; of course it's not lost if you know where it is," says, " Then your silver teapot is at the bottom of the sea, for it has just fallen overboard, sir." There are millions in treasure lying at the bottom of the sea, but though we know where it can be found, it is as surely lost as the thousands of ships that lie rotting and rusting under fathoms of green water. There is a king's ransom lying in Vigo Bay, and a fortune in the clay underneath the waters at Tobermory; untold millions in the Caribbean from Panama to Hispaniola, and millions more sunk in the seas around the Cape, not to speak of the Cocos and Trinidad hoards. But it might as well be on the moon, for men will never get it unless the seas dry up. And when that happens we shall have lost interest in all worldly treasure.

CHAPTER XII

Sea Adventure

You gentlemen of England, that live at home at ease,
Full little do you think upon the danger of the seas;
Give ear unto the mariners, and they will plainly show,
The cares, and the fears, when the stormy winds do blow.

Old Sea Ballad

DURING the winter, in the small country churches around the coast of Britain, the parsons still announce the hymn " For those in peril on the sea," for even steamships are not immune from the risk of collision or of leaving their bones on a rocky lee-shore. In the days of sail, loss of life at sea was a commoner occurrence than it is now, and the old ballads on the danger of the seas were not written without good reason. Men went to sea with less certainty of a safe return than they do in these days of wireless and the gyroscopic compass. A 300-ton brig sets out from Liverpool to the far-distant port of Boston—a six weeks' passage, shall we say, and one full of peril in the depth of winter. If the heavy seas of the North Atlantic smash her rudder she will broach to, and another ship become overdue. If the constant labouring in bad weather strains her planking and opens the seams she may founder, and the crew will have to take to the boats; or she may strike an iceberg in the fog off the Grand Banks. In any event, the results are much the same, and some weeks later a survivor or two, picked up at sea or cast ashore, will bring home the lugubrious story,

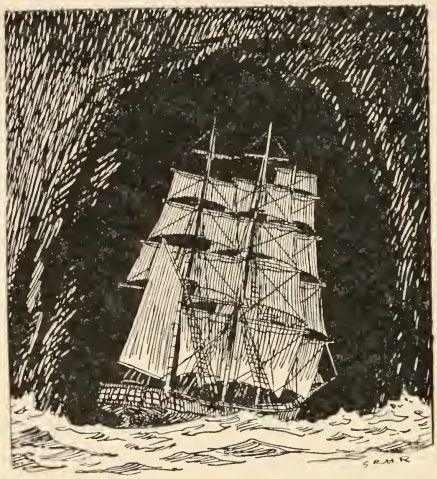
and the newspapers of the day will feature the story of the loss.

A hundred years ago there were still pirates roving the seas, and Benito de Soto, one of the bloodiest rascals that ever sailed, was forcing the Honourable East India Company's ships to voyage in convoy for safety's sake. Then there was the risk of fire, of running on a lee-shore, of collision, and of foundering in a gale, not to speak of mutiny among the crews or attacks from privateers. Life at sea a hundred years ago could be very exciting indeed, and a passage to Australia was not undertaken by the faint-hearted. Among the experiences of many an old-time sailor was that of being wrecked on some lonely island and being forced to live a Crusoe existence until picked up by some passing trader or whaler. The wreck of the *General Grant* provides a true story of this type.

In May of the year 1866 there sailed from Melbourne, bound for England, the American-owned full-rigged ship *General Grant*, with many passengers and a large quantity of gold on board. There were 4000 ounces of that precious stuff in four wooden boxes in the ship's strong room, apart from the large amount of gold carried by the passengers, many of them being successful diggers returning home with their newly won fortunes. The *General Grant* bore to the south-east, intending to call at a New Zealand port, and for nine days sailed in light winds until she came up to the Auckland Archipelago. After dark on the ninth day the ship was found to be too close to one of the islands for safety; but when the captain tried to make an offing the wind dropped, and the heavy sea-swell inexorably drove the unfortunate vessel on to the foot of the cliffs, which rose 400 feet above the sea.

For some reason or other, perhaps because they could not reach bottom, the anchor was not let go in an effort to save the ship. However that may be, the *General Grant*,

with eighty-three people on board, struck the rocks with a force that carried her jib-boom away and nearly shook the masts out of her. Shortly afterward her stern struck, and a little later it was discovered, by hanging lights over the ship's side, that she was gradually drifting into a vast cavern in the cliff face. As she drove farther into the



THE "GENERAL GRANT"

cave the masts, scraping the roof, brought down large pieces of rock, to the great peril of the people underneath, who took refuge below decks to avoid the shower of stones and boulders. Boats could not be lowered on account of the danger from falling rock.

During the night the wind rose, and the ship began to beat her life out in the cavern. First the fore-mast came down, then the fore-deck was crushed in by a fall of rock. Picture the horror of that long night! The passengers and crew crowded in the stern, while in the darkness heavy

pieces of rock fell from above in an almost constant bombardment. To leave the ship seemed like suicide; yet to stay in her was to await death in an even more unpleasant manner. The situation became so terrible that at length there was no choice left but to take to the boats. The largest of the three boats was launched by the simple expedient of letting it float off as a big wave came aboard. Some of the passengers remained on board sooner than leave their gold; the rest crowded into the boats, many beyond control, in disorder. The whole company would have perished in the cave had it not been for a few resolute men who kept cool and, by their example, gradually heartened the others. As the three boats left the ship she went down, carrying with her those who had mounted the rigging of the broken mizen-mast. In the darkness the flutter of the captain's white handkerchief could be seen waving farewell as the falling mizen carried him under.

One more tragedy was to happen before the survivors quitted the cave. The crowded long-boat capsized in the rising seas, and only three of the people in her were saved by the other boats. These latter now proceeded slowly through the breakers while the cliffs were searched for a landing-place. But the island rose sheer from the sea, and, a landing appearing impossible, the overloaded boats were steered for another island that could be seen about six miles away. The boats were several times nearly swamped during the passage, for, besides their human load, they carried a quantity of pork and beef as well as fifty tins of *bouillon*.

In the two boats were, altogether, fifteen people, one a woman, the sole survivors of the eighty-three people in the ship. They climbed on to a large rock nearly two miles from the island just at nightfall, and lay there shivering until the following morning, when they were able to reach the island in the two boats.

The time of the year at which they were wrecked (May) is approaching winter in those latitudes, and flurries of snow blew across the shivering wretches as they crouched together for shelter among the rocks at night. During the day they wandered in search of food, for the self-constituted leader, an Irishman, one Jack Teer, had wisely insisted that they keep the preserved food against the time when it might be taken on a boat journey. The only food that could be found, however, was shell-fish, and even some varieties of this were found to be poisonous, and made those who ate them seriously ill.

There is something very similar in the experience of these castaways to that of the people of the *Strathmore*,[1] which was wrecked on the Crozets nine years later. But these unfortunates from the *General Grant* had taken with them in the boats almost nothing beyond the few provisions already mentioned. Crusoe constructed a raft and made several trips to his wreck, bringing back a houseful of chests and provisions; but these modern Crusoes had no such fortune. Nor was their choice of isle of the best. This refuge was a volcanic rock on which all vegetation had a stunted, starved appearance, due to the rigorous climate.

The position of the castaways was as wretched as it could be. They were but thinly clad, without food or weapons to obtain it. It seemed that they must all die of cold and starvation within a short time. Then, when they had been on the island a few days, one of the party made the momentous discovery of a box of matches in his coat pocket. This meant life-saving warmth, but the matches were struck one after another without producing a flame, until there was only one left. Realizing that in this match lay their last hope of producing a fire, the leader dried it *in his hair* to make sure that dampness would not be the

[1] Told in *Ships and Sailors*.

cause if this last match failed. But it did not fail, and once the fire was started it was kept going by each member of the party taking it in turn to watch and prevent it from going out.

These people were to exist on the island *nearly a year and a half before they were rescued*, and had it not been for the fact that they learned how to catch seals and wild goats, not one of the party would have survived the experience. The second life-saving discovery (if we count the matches as the first) was the finding and killing of a few seals which were too old to escape from the clubs of the sailors. These provided oil, food, and skins for the clothing which Jack Teer, the Admirable Crichton of the party, sewed together for the rest. Indeed, without Jack Teer the others might never have pulled through, for he was not only leader, but chief hunter, and provided for his flock. As the months dragged on he discovered wild goats among the rocks, and after many failures contrived a way of capturing them—and so pushed starvation a little farther into the uncertain future. The goats, like the seals, were killed by the primitive means of a club, but later on the hunters developed more finesse in their hunting and caught the goats by building traps for them. Goat meat is a delicacy compared with the oily flesh of the seal, and the discovery heartened the despairing castaways as nothing else had done. Life would have been intolerable had the men had nothing to do, but the constant need to search for food by hunting kept them too occupied to have time for gloomy musings. Then some ingenious fellow made a crude pack of playing-cards with flat oyster-shells suitably marked, and thus a pastime was devised for occasional idle hours.

After the people had been some months on the island the leader recollected the tale of a wreck that had occurred in these parts many years before, and persuaded some of

the others to accompany him in one of the boats to search for this wreck on the slight chance that something useful might be found.

At first the others would not listen to the proposal, but Jack Teer must have numbered persuasive gifts among his other accomplishments, for he ended by getting three men to go with him. After a long search among the islands Teer's optimism was justified, for they discovered not only the other castaways' hut, but several articles of use to their finders. They found sailcloth, a file, a shovel, a flint, iron, and nails. The shovel was cut up into strips with the file, the strips being then sharpened to make several useful knives. With these crude knives and the bit of old canvas the castaways probably felt far richer than they had felt when they left the diggings with bags of gold.

Various means of getting a message to civilization were tried, and one, a very ingenious plan, ended in a tragi-comedy. Seals' bladders were inflated and tied to pieces of wood on which were written an appeal for help. But to the dismay of those who launched these messages the sea-birds, mistaking the bladders for some new kind of food, pecked at them until they burst and sank. Another scheme, and the one that was the ultimate cause of the rescue of the castaways, was the construction of little boats from logs of wood. On the sails, which were made out of zinc, was scratched a message telling of the wreck and asking for assistance. Several were dispatched from the lee side of the island, and in the course of time one of these little barques was found and the fate of the *General Grant* at last made known to the outside world.

In October a distant sail was seen, and though a big fire was lighted, the ship continued on its course and was

presently lost to sight of the frantic people on the island. After this disappointment four of the men agreed to set out in one of the boats in an attempt to reach New Zealand, 400 miles to the north. The boat was decked over something in the way Shackleton's boat was decked when he made that magnificent passage to South Georgia in 1916. But after the four men left the island for help they were never heard of again. They had sailed away in a leaky boat without compass or chart to try to bring help to their comrades just as Shackleton did, but without having the latter's success.

Scurvy now appeared among the hapless people. Many of them lost all desire to live, and it was only by the indomitable will of their leader that the sufferers made any effort to get well. With a whip he forced them to take exercise, to rouse them from the fatal lethargy of people who have made up their minds that they are going to die. Even so, one of the party, an elderly man, died in September, leaving but ten people out of the original fifteen. Teer literally kept death away with a whip, fighting a delaying action until help came. His courage was rewarded, for on November 21, 1867, a vessel was seen bearing for the island. It was the whaling-brig *Amherst*, whose captain had picked up one of the little ships launched by Teer. On reading the message written on the zinc sail Captain Gilroy, of the *Amherst*, altered his course for the island.

And then happened an amazing thing. When he stood in close to the land he grew suspicious of the castaways, thinking them to be mad people or perhaps convicts, and so would not allow them on board. At this the ten marooned wretches grew frantic with despair and pleaded to be taken on the brig. The captain remained firm in his decision, and had it not been for a slight chance the poor devils might have been left to die on the island. What saved them was the recognition of Teer by one of

the brig's men, who had known him years before, and now recognized his friend despite the heavy beard, skin clothing, and grime. This sailor vouched for Teer as an honest man, after which no more time was lost in getting the shipwrecked people on board.

The castaways were given every possible care, and in due course were taken to Melbourne, where their appearance, dressed in their skin clothing, on the deck of the *Amherst* created an enormous sensation. Jack Teer, the man who did so much to keep the little party alive, was presented by his shipwrecked mates with a gold ring and an address as a mark of appreciation for what he had done. The Government of New Zealand publicly honoured him by a gift of money to reimburse him for the gold that he had lost in the wreck. But as he refused to accept this gift unless they gave as much to each of those who had shared his experience, the Government, not feeling disposed to do this, persuaded Teer to accept a magnificent gold watch instead.

There were some attempts to find the wreck of the *General Grant* in order to secure the gold, but, so far as we know, none of the treasure-searchers succeeded in their quest.

The story of the derelict brig *Polly*,[1] which drifted about the North Atlantic for six months with living men

[1] Told in detail by Ralph D. Paine in *Lost Ships and Lonely Seas*.

on board, is easily one of the most remarkable happenings in the annals of the sea.

The *Polly* was a tight little brig of 130 tons and seventy-five feet long. She left Boston, Massachusetts, in December 1811 for Santa Cruz with a cargo of timber and salted meat for plantation slaves. The brig's company consisted of Captain Cazneau, the mate, four seamen, and the cook, besides two passengers, a Mr Hunt and a negro girl nine years old.

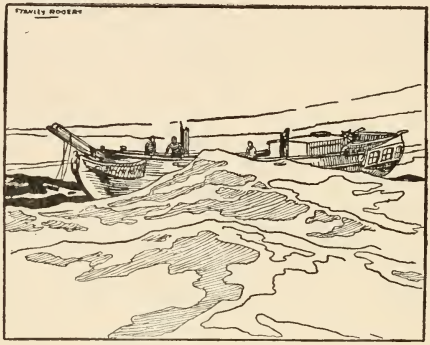
A week from Santa Cruz a heavy gale arose, and the *Polly* began to leak badly, and soon there were six feet of water in the hold. The force of the hurricane put the little ship over on her beam-ends, and, the deck having become untenable, the crew took to the rigging, which lay over almost in a horizontal position, the sea meanwhile burying the ship in a smother of foam. As the brig continued to lie at a dangerous angle the captain ordered the masts to be cut away. When the fore and main [1] went overboard the *Polly* swung on to an even keel, but she was waterlogged and no longer rose to the seas, though, being loaded with timber, she could not sink. During the gale Mr Hunt, the passenger, was swept overboard, but afterward the negro child was found alive in the cabin.

When the gale had blown itself out the hungry crew succeeded in fishing out from the hold some casks of salt meat, which they had to eat raw, having no fire. For twelve days they ate this salty stuff, until the ingenious cook, an Indian, actually got a fire going by rubbing two sticks together and starting a blaze in the brick oven of the galley on the deck. The brig was now drifting under the southern sun. The thirty-gallon keg of water lashed to the quarterdeck lasted for eighteen days, after which the crew depended on rain-squalls for fresh water.

When they had been adrift forty days the last of the

[1] Brigs have two masts only.

salt meat was finished, and from now onward the crew of the *Polly* began to experience with increasing severity the pangs of starvation. The brig had lost her rudder, and began to wallow in the seas with a jerky movement that never ceased, except in the brief intervals when the sea was calm. In the Caribbean, where the brig was now drifting, there were usually pirates and slavers in great numbers, but now, as fate would have it, never a sail hove



THE BRIG "POLLY"

in sight. Even a pirate or a slave ship would have been a welcome sight to the *Polly's* starving men.

After fifty days the mate, a man of thirty-five who had always been in robust health, died. There were six men left alive. Then a week later a young seaman, named Howe, died, and had it not been their good fortune to catch a shark about this time others might have succumbed also. Necessity sharpened the survivors' wits, and a means of distilling sea-water was devised out of the most unpromising material. Fishing about in the water in the hold, the men hooked up an iron tea-kettle. This made the body of the distilling machine, and by breaking off

the barrel of the captain's pistol a tube was formed which was attached to the spout of the kettle. By turning this contrivance upside down over an iron pot full of sea-water standing on the galley fire, a tolerable distilling plant was made, and by dint of much patience a few spoonfuls of fresh water were obtained each day from the muzzle of the old pistol-barrel.

Still the wretched men lived and hoped for rescue, existing on barnacles which grew on the brig's hull.

Another man, the cook, died. Then occurred an incident which, though ghastly enough, could have been much worse. The dead body of the cook lay on deck: the surviving men were starving. Cannibalism may have entered their thoughts, but if it did they rejected the idea. But they did cut off a leg of the corpse to use as shark bait—and, we may add, with successful results. The catching of another shark delayed death for a while, but not for long. Two weeks later another man, a seaman, died, and there remained but three men on the derelict.

April came, and the *Polly* had drifted into the Sargasso Sea, that huge area of floating weed west of the Caribbean. This sea, the bane of sailing-ships, proved a boon to the three men on the wreck, for here, among the floating weed,

they were able to catch many kinds of fish and molluscs. Fish-hooks were hammered out of heated iron nails, and lines were drawn from lengths of cordage after unroving it. Not only were fish enough for present needs caught, but a stock was dried and then salted, for in these tropic latitudes they would have otherwise quickly putrefied.

The waterlogged hull had now been over four months drifting in the southern seas, and another man died. There remained but two men on the wreck, the captain and a sailor named Badger. These two, haggard and ill, were still alive on the wreck when it drifted out of the Sargasso Sea into the open Atlantic and within the track of shipping. Many a distant sail was sighted, but the low-lying derelict, with her masts gone and her deck almost level with the sea, was not seen by those on passing vessels until the *Polly* had drifted to the longitude of the Canaries. Then—it was in the month of June, and the wreck had drifted for six months—three ships in company hove in sight, and by the way they altered their course and stood toward the wreck the two men on board her knew that they had been seen. The nearest vessel was the *Fame*, of Hull, an English ship, and it was her long-boat that took off the two men from the *Polly*. They were given every care, and later transferred to a brig bound for an American port. Captain Cazneau and the seaman Badger had lived on the wreck for over six months—an experience that is one of the most remarkable in all the amazing annals of the sea.

Here is a story of men who spent twenty-seven days in open boats in the South Atlantic after their ship, the three-masted barque *San Rafael*, had caught fire.[1]

The *San Rafael*, owned by Balfour, Williamson, and Company, of Liverpool, left that port in October 1874 with coal for Valparaiso. The passage south was un-

[1] See the *Wide World Magazine*, 1898.

eventful, and the crew were anticipating their shore leave in Valparaiso, where they were due to arrive shortly. Then, when the ship was beating to the south-west of the

THE "SAN RAFAEL"

Horn, she ran into a very heavy gale, which nearly dismasted her. For some days the wind blew with appalling fury and then slowly decreased in violence; but no sooner was this peril over than a greater one appeared. When the forepeak was entered to get at the spare gear to make repairs to the damaged ship the cargo was found to be on fire. This was on December 28.

The ship was over a thousand miles from the Falklands when the discovery was made, and though it was not the nearest land, Captain McAdams decided, as the wind was fair for these islands, to make for them with all possible speed; if it held they might be able to reach land before the fire destroyed the ship. It was impossible to extinguish the flames. The only thing to do was to keep as much air out as possible by battening down the hatches and to crowd on all the sail the ship could stand. This was done, and for three days she ran before the wind in heavy seas until the night of January 2, when the main hatch blew up and a column of flame shot up above the mastheads. For some hours the crew worked heroically at the pumps until it became plain that the *San Rafael* could not swim much longer. The captain gave orders to abandon the ship. The intense blackness of the night, coupled with the high seas which were running, made the work of launching the boats extremely difficult. The *San Rafael* was hove to, and four boats were put over the stern, but one was smashed and sank immediately, with all the provisions it contained. There remained three boats afloat, one a mere seventeen-foot dinghy. The captain and his wife and nine men were in the long-boat, the rest of the officers and crew going into the other two.

The Falklands, where white people could be found, were 450 miles away, but Tierra del Fuego, a barren land, was only 150 miles to the north-west. So it was decided to take the shorter distance and make their way on foot over the island to the Strait of Magellan in the hope of being picked up by a ship.

In a snowstorm the boats got separated, and though later the two smaller ones came together again, the captain's boat did not reappear.[1] His was the long-boat, and

[1] It is known that the captain's party reached land, for years later their bones were discovered on Tierra del Fuego.

therefore the others had no forebodings for its safety, but what did fill their hearts with fear was that the missing boat carried the greater part of the provisions brought from the ship.

The seriousness of this discovery needs no emphasizing. For the present, however, the men gave no serious thought to food. They had no time to be hungry. Their whole attention was needed to keep the boats from swamping in the steep seas. The men in the dinghy—a boat almost as broad as it was long—especially had a terrible time at first, until they grew more skilful at keeping their craft head on to the seas. For this is, of course, the whole art of riding out a gale—to face the oncoming seas. To run before them in a small craft is very dangerous, for if your boat is travelling the least bit slower than the following sea the water will break aboard and cause your little ship to founder.

For a whole day and a half the gale continued with unrelenting fury, after which it moderated sufficiently for the men in the boats to turn their thoughts to food. The first meal was now served, when each man was given one biscuit. This was the first food tasted since leaving the *San Rafael.* The men were soaked to the skin, and in their exhausted condition, through toiling for a day and a half without sleep, the single biscuit did but little to revive their energies.

On this day, the gale having gone down to a strong breeze, the boats made steady progress northward till noon of the following day, when the faint outline of land was seen about fifty miles away. By dark they had come up to within thirty miles of the land, and by moonlight they were but a few miles from the shore, when prudence bade them heave to till morning. Daylight unveiled a rocky coastline of vast, steep cliffs without any signs of openings where a boat could be run in; but after cruising in closer

a narrow opening was discovered, and in between the cliffs the boats were run. After staying here a day or two and reconnoitring the cliffs the plan of leaving the boats and crossing the mountains was abandoned, for the mountains were quite impassable for a party of men without sufficient clothing or equipment. The mate talked it over with the men, and it was unanimously agreed to

THE "SAN RAFAEL'S" BOATS

put to sea again in the hope of being picked up by some passing ship.

The food stores remaining were two fifty-pound bags of ship's biscuit, eight gallons of fresh water, a quantity of smoking tobacco, and forty-eight pounds of Australian mutton in tins.

The rations were a small piece of meat and one biscuit a day for each person. Fortunately, they had a few matches, and these were divided equally between them, each man wrapping his precious matches in a piece of oilskin and putting the little package inside his shirt to keep it dry. Though they had a sufficiency of tobacco, there was only one pipe between them, and that pipe was smoked by the whole party, it being passed, so to speak,

from mouth to mouth, every one having a few puffs and handing it on!

So the days went by. The men survived almost incredible hardships, and the boats weathered terrible gales. For days together they would get neither rest nor sleep, while fighting to keep their little boats afloat. Many times the boats were more than half full of water, which necessitated every one but the steersman's baling with all his might before another sea came aboard. One man must always be at the helm to keep the boat end on to the seas, for should it slew round broadside nothing could save it from capsizing.

The constant drenching brought on fever and rheumatic symptoms, and, to make misery complete, the sea-water soaked the biscuit, spoiling so much of it that the already infinitesimal ration had to be further reduced. The ration was now half a biscuit and three ounces of meat a day!

The South Atlantic is not exactly crowded with shipping, and they had been at sea over two weeks before a sail was sighted. The vessel came within less than a mile of the boats and—sailed on!

After this bitter disappointment the men fell into the depths of despondency. They had rowed with all their strength to get within hail of the vessel, and had not been seen. No other reason could be offered to explain the ship's passing on. Three days later the last morsels of biscuit and meat were given out. From now on there would be no food: unless they were soon rescued it would be too late.

Shortly after this the ship's cook died, and his body was committed to the sea. A week had gone by since the last food was tasted, and the emaciated skeletons that had once been strong men gave up hope of life. They lay down in the boats, awaiting the end. Such an existence

was not worth while fighting for, and most of the eleven men decided not to keep up the struggle any longer. They were haggard, weak, and unshaven, with fever burning in their sunken eyes—spectres of men.

Then, such is the tenacity of life, all became changed. A sail was seen, and the dying men revived. Despair turned to hope in a twinkling. Frantic signals were made, they were seen. Thank God! the ship bore down toward them. Her sails were clewed up. She came up into the wind. The two boats were now alongside. Strong hands tenderly lifted the starving men on to the deck and carried them below. After weeks of careful nursing all the eleven men recovered. They had been twenty-seven days in the boats, the last eight days without food.

A boat journey that ended less happily than the story just related was that made by six deserters from the detachment of the Garrison Artillery stationed at St Helena in 1799. The leader, a soldier possessing the familiar name of John Brown, induced some sailors from an American ship named *Columbia*, then lying in the roads at Georgetown, to take him and his five companions on board. The young republic of the United States was not on the happiest of terms with England at that time, and we surmise that the six deserters had no great difficulty in persuading the Yankee captain to take them on board.

But the *Columbia* did not leave quickly enough for the runaways, who naturally wished to get away from these dangerous waters, where a search-party from the shore might find them. So they decided on the risky plan of returning ashore and stealing a boat from the beach during the night. This project was carried out successfully, an old whale-boat being found, which, though leaky and lacking sufficient gear, was hastily pushed off even as the lanterns of the search-party were seen approaching.

Actually the plan was to row several miles off shore, and there await the Yankee ship when she finally put to sea. They stayed in the vicinity for two days, when, the *Columbia* failing to appear, they agreed to wait no longer lest a man-of-war's boat should come out and find them. It was decided to make for Ascension Island, which lay to the north. They had no sails and perforce had to row—a dismal augury for success on such a long journey, especially as the boat *contained but two oars*. Furthermore,

THE SIX DESERTERS

only one of the party, a man named Parr, was a seaman, and his knowledge of navigation was scanty at the best. However, as they had no quadrant, Parr's lack of knowledge was not serious. They had contrived to get a chart and a compass, and with these elementary aids the deserters felt confident of reaching Ascension before long. For provisions they had a bag containing twenty-five pounds of biscuit and a small keg of water. That was all.

They started their long row on June 10, and for eight days slowly progressed northward, by which time, having seen no land, they concluded that Ascension had been missed! Birds were seen, but no land.

At this time they made a sail out of their six shirts,

their need to reach land being greater than their need of shirts. A sip of water and two ounces of biscuit comprised their entire daily sustenance, but by June 26 the biscuit had gone.

On July 1 a small dolphin was caught with a gaff, and this precious catch was made to last four days. Now thoughts of suicide entered one man's mind, and three of the others showed a similar disposition, but the remaining two so strenuously opposed the notion that the others suggested one should die to provide food for the rest. This was agreed to by all, and lots were drawn to see who should die. One man was excluded because he was ill with some fever, and we presume his flesh was not considered fit for human food!

One, McKinnon, drew the losing ticket, and, calmly saying that he was resigned to leaving this world, bled himself to death by opening an artery with a sharp nail. This was the method of death that had been agreed upon between the men. To those who have never been hungry for very long the notion of cannibalism is simply beyond understanding; but these men, it must be remembered, had got to that state of moral and mental anæsthesia where life was worth very little, and in their state, when they had already been eating their shoes, the step downward into cannibalism was not so hideous as it seems to those who read about it from the security of an arm-chair. However that may be, the body of McKinnon was eaten, and then, ironically enough, a day or two later land was sighted.

When the coast was reached a landing was attempted, but the boat capsized while the crew were getting her through the heavy breakers, and two of the men, being too weak to save themselves, were drowned.

The three survivors found that they had landed on one of the Bahamas, and presently they were discovered by some of the inhabitants, who clothed and fed them and

sent them on a vessel to San Salvador. There the men told a story of misfortune which so touched the heart-strings of the people of San Salvador that a subscription was started for them which reached the satisfactory sum of £600. The peculiar sequel to this record is that John Brown afterward had twinges of conscience and gave himself up to the authorities, and it was then that the details of this story came out.

The annals of the sea contain so many amazing records of long-distance passages in small open boats by ship-wrecked men that were one to compile an anthology of such odysseys one would suffer an embarrassment of choice. The two cases just related are by no means the most remarkable episodes of their kind.

The voyage of the *Bounty's* boat, when Lieutenant Bligh and eighteen men were set adrift in a twenty-three foot launch by a mutinous crew and had to cross 4000 miles of the Pacific before they found help, is generally accepted as the greatest feat of mental and physical endurance ever recorded. The mutiny of H.M.S. *Bounty* and the subsequent boat journey of the officers and the loyal men has become so well known that there is no need to retail it here.[1]

The journey of the pinnace of the *Centaur*, one of Rodney's squadron, which foundered in 1782 off the West Indies, is another famous epic of the sea. Twelve of the *Centaur's* men in a damaged boat without a compass and without a sail, and steering by the sun and the stars, were sixteen days in mid-Atlantic in heavy weather before they reached Fayal more dead than alive. They lost but one of the party through exposure and starvation.

Another heroic journey was that of the *Earl of Eldon's* boats in the Indian Ocean in 1834, which in these modern

[1] The whole story has been recounted in *Ships and Sailors*.

days was repeated, with even greater hardships, by the men of the s.s. *Trevessa*, a cargo steamer, in 1923.

The *Earl of Eldon* caught fire in September 1834 when 450 miles from Rodriguez Island, and forty-five people, including three women and a child, the whole party being divided among two boats, safely reached this island after a passage of thirteen days. The *Trevessa* sprang a leak in a gale and foundered, also in the Indian Ocean, when she was 1556 miles from Rodriguez. The crew got away in two boats under the captain and the first mate respectively. The captain's boat, starting with twenty-three men, reached Rodriguez after a passage of twenty-three days. Two of the men died before reaching land.

The mate's boat started with twenty-four men and reached Mauritius after twenty-five days, losing six men during the passage. The distance travelled by the second boat was 1747 miles.

While it may be said that these people had boat journeys thrust upon them, there have been men who have set out on boat journeys for no other reason than that they wanted to. These divine fools have some inward urge which drives them, without any other motive than a love of adventure, and perhaps boredom with ordinary civilized existence, to set out on some crazy voyage that they are fully aware may cost them their lives. But the world would be poorer without these men who provide adventure by proxy for the stay-at-homes.

When Captain Voss, a few years ago, set out on a voyage round the world in an Indian canoe there were those who were so sure he was mad that they would have prevented him going could they have done so. Yet Voss completed his amazing venture, and the literature of the sea is richer by the story he had to tell.

He actually circumnavigated the world in an American Indian cedar dug-out canoe, arriving in the Thames in

September 1904 from Vancouver after a voyage lasting three years and three months. This canoe, bought from a Chinook Indian in British Columbia, was thirty feet long, and, to make it seaworthy, had been decked over and a cockpit made to accommodate two men. In a leisurely way Voss, with different mates, sailed across the Pacific, thence down the Indian Ocean to the Cape, whence he crossed to South America, and from there up the Atlantic and then to London. In the Pacific, his second companion (his first had left him at Suva) was lost overboard, and with him went the compass; hence Voss not only had to sail on to Australia alone, but had to do so without a compass. And, *mirabile dictu*, he made his landfall, Sydney Harbour, as exactly as if he had worked out his reckoning with instruments.

Landsmen are wont to imagine that it is almost impossible to live at sea in a small open boat. Indeed, we are apt to regard the steamers that run between Dover and Calais as being quite unsuitable for crossing the Atlantic. Nothing less than a 50,000-ton liner would suit some people for the Western Ocean crossing. Nevertheless, if properly handled a small open boat is safe enough in heavy seas. The usual dangers of boat journeys have not lain in the inadequacy of the boat itself, but in the risk of starvation. Given sufficient food and water, a skilled seaman could go to Australia in a dinghy!

On June 6, 1897, two adventurous Norwegians set out from New York in an ordinary clinker-built rowing-boat to *row* across the Atlantic. The time of the year was, of course, favourable, and they reached England without serious accident after a fifty-five-day passage.

Ten days out they passed their first steamer, a large North German Lloyd liner westward bound. The liner stopped while her officers spoke to the two venturers, who declined all offers of assistance. The passengers on the

lofty decks wished to throw food and even money down to the tiny craft bobbing alongside the liner, but the two Norwegians calmly refused to take anything and then announced that they must be going. They still had nearly 3000 miles to row, and it were better to get it over before winter came.

Four weeks out they had an experience that might have proved fatal had they not been prepared for just such an occurrence. On July 10, during a westerly gale, their

boat capsized, and both men were thrown into the sea—this on a pitch-black night! They both literally fought their way back to the upturned boat, and after the most desperate efforts succeeded in getting it right side up again.

Here is where their foresight in having most of their gear and provisions *fastened* in the boat saved them. Some things were lost, including a part of their provisions, cooking pots, and boat gear, but there was sufficient food and water left to carry on with, and all was not lost. However, the situation was bad enough. They were sitting soaking wet in a boat half full of water, in the inky blackness, while the mountainous seas threatened every moment to send them again rolling over into the water. But the

longest nights come to an end, and with the coming of daylight the weather moderated, and the shivering men were able partially to dry their clothes and set their tumbled boat in order.

Half-way across they met a Norwegian barque, which hove to while the two men stretched their legs on her decks. This was on July 15, and for five weeks, save the few minutes when they were in the water, they had not been out of their little boat. They left the barque with some much-needed provisions and fresh water, and proceeded on their course for the English Channel. They reached St Mary's, Scilly Isles, where they landed, on August 1, their task virtually accomplished.

Some features of the boat are of interest. Provision was made for lashing canvas to the gunwales to cover the whole boat except for two openings for the men's bodies, something after the style of the Esquimo kyak. At each end of the boat were watertight compartments in which were stored food and matches, and certain things which must be kept dry. These compartments also would act as buoyancy chambers in the event of the boat filling with water. Most of the gear and tinned provisions were lashed or screwed down, and several extra oars were carried in case of loss or breakage of part of their only propelling agency, for they carried no sails or any means of propulsion whatever except oars!

These intrepid adventurers do these things to please themselves. And what pleasure is there in self-imposed hardships? Is not the answer in the single word 'ambition'—ambition to accomplish something difficult, to win one's spurs, to triumph over the flesh?

To some natures a hazardous adventure is the only way of adequately expressing themselves. Every one, high and low, must find an outlet for self-expression —some in chronicling the deeds of others, as with the

present writer: others in action. Men of words or men of action, it is all the same: both are finding their outlet. And what is this need of self-expression after all but the human hunger for that elusive something we call romance?

INDEX